



AL COMMISSION
ON
BOUR IN INDIA

EVIDENCE

Vol. I.—Part 2.

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
(including Sind)

14 ORAL EVIDENCE

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TERMS OF REFERENCE.

“To inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers, and on the relations between employers and employed, and to make recommendations.”

NOTE.—“Industrial undertaking” for the purpose of the Commission is interpreted as in Article I of the Washington Hours Convention, which is as follows :—

“For the purpose of this Convention, the term ‘industrial undertaking’ includes particularly :—

“(a) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.

“(b) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.

“(c) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.

“(d) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand.”

* * * * *

The competent authority in each country shall define the line of division which separates industry from commerce and agriculture.

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LIST OF SUBJECTS.

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- (1) *Origin of Labour.*
 - (i) Extent of migration.
 - (ii) Causes of particular streams of migration.
 - (iii) Changes in recent years.
- (2) *Contact with villages.*
 - (i) Extent and frequency of return.
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 - (iii) Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.
 - (iv) Unemployment Insurance.
 - (v) Application of International Conventions relating to unemployment.
- (8) *Labour "turnover."**
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 - (ii) Extent of casual employment.
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 - (a) Extent, character and causes.
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* This word should be read as indicating generally the changes in composition of the labour staff of an undertaking.

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE THE
ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR
IN INDIA

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

FIRST MEETING

KARACHI

Wednesday, 16th October 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H.,
P.C.

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lieut.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,

I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mrs. HOMAI F. J. KARAKA.

Mrs. HURDEVIBAI A. MASAND. } *Lady Assessors.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. }

Mr. A. DIBDIN. } *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. C. S. C. HARRISON, C.I.E., I.S.E., Chief Engineer,
Lloyd Barrage and Canals Construction.

A-1. *The Chairman* : Mr. Harrison, you are the Chief Engineer of the Lloyd Barrage and Canals Construction ?—Yes.

A-2. You have been good enough to submit to us a very clear statement on the subjects with which we are concerned relating to the work for which you are responsible. We shall shortly pay a visit to see for ourselves something about your work, and I imagine, therefore, that we would not be detaining you at any length to-day. You have told us very clearly in your memorandum the various streams of migration from which your labour is recruited and it appears that for the most part it is contract labour ?—Yes.

A-3. I take it therefore that you do not keep a register of the workers on your scheme ?—No, not nominal registers. We keep a record of daily attendance of the total number of people, and monthly we try to group them into different castes and nationalities and with reference to the different parts of the Presidency from which they come and the different classes of labour.

A-4. Have you any tabulated statement ?—Yes, I have got it in a rough form ; but I can give you a statement of the various kinds of employees coming from different localities, if you would like to have it.

A-5. That will be in explanation of what you have told us ?—Yes ; I will give you the actual figures.

A-6. There is one point I should particularly like to ask you whether that record shows the number of people who return over and over again to your work?—No.

A-7. Then at each re-engagement after they have been back home they are, as far as you are concerned, new labour?—Yes, that is right. The only thing we are interested in is the increase in the numbers. We want numbers, if we can get them.

A-8. Would you tell us how you pay the contractors? Are they paid monthly?—The contractors are paid as often as we can possibly measure up their work. The work is measured up once a month if the contractor is a man with big capital; otherwise if he is a man with small capital we measure up once a week if necessary. Our aim is to keep the small contractor if possible, and measure his work as often as he wants money.

A-9. You have no knowledge of or responsibility for the method by which the men themselves are paid by the contractors?—No. As mentioned in my written statement complaints soon come to us if the people are not being paid properly. They come up in numbers before the Government officer and say "we have been swindled" or "under-paid by the contractor". We then get hold of the contractor, use our good offices and see that things are put right. We have no real power to make the contractor deal squarely with his labour, but I think that on the whole, when we take him to task severely and tell him that there is trouble ahead of him, he falls into line with us and tries to correct his ways.

A-10. Is the chief complaint that payment is delayed too long?—No. The chief complaint is about swindling over the measurements of work done by each group of labour. Generally they work in groups of 10 or 15. Practically all the work is done on piece-work system. The contractor puts just a few men on a muster to do miscellaneous work, and those men, I think, are paid fairly regularly; otherwise he could not get them, for no one wants to go on a muster.

A-11. Does he pay monthly, fortnightly or weekly?—I think he pays them weekly. It is a very small payment because most of the people are indebted to him; he has given them very heavy advances; so he pays them only a little just a day before the bazaar for grain and settles up his so-called accounts at the end of the season.

A-12. How long do you anticipate the constructional work will continue?—It will continue till 1934. The great bulk of it will be finished in June 1932 when water will be let into the canals. After that it will be a matter of completing outlying and miscellaneous works. We are aiming at having in the year 1932 something like 400,000 units, if we possibly can.

A-13. What meaning do you attach to the word "units" in that connection?—It means labour employed throughout the year. We take the monthly totals and add them up. As I said, we hope to get 400,000. I have some figures if they will be of interest to you.

A-14. That will be the maximum on constructional works?—Yes, that is what we want on constructional work.

A-14a. The supply of labour has been less than you could employ?—Considerably less. I can give you one or two figures. In 1926 our maximum in any one month was 16,271 in the month of February 1926. Our minimum was in August 1926, 5,769. The total number of units on the monthly basis for the year was 97,000. In 1927 our maximum was 15,154, which was rather less than the previous year; but the monthly average was more because we had 142,291 units as against 97,000 for the previous year. In 1928 our monthly maximum rose to 26,524, our minimum to 12,375. The total employment for that year was 220,944. For this year our monthly maximum rose to 38,000 in the month of March and the minimum so far (up to the end of July) was 19,500, which is greater than our maximum in 1927. The total number of units employed is 205,856 for seven months of this year. So we shall probably get close upon 350,000 this year.

A-15. I am not quite clear yet how you reckon the unit. The largest number employed at one time hitherto is 36,000?—Yes, that is right. Correctly it is 38,300.

A-16. How do you convert that into units?—I have taken each month's figures and added them up, and to get the average divided them by 12.

A-17. *Mr. Cliff*: That comes to 38,000 in one month?—Yes. This year, for instance, in January it was 28,907, in February 35,037, in March 38,335, in April 31,729, in May 30,000 odd, in June 20,000 odd and in July 19,000 odd. That totals up to 205,856 which is the figure I gave you just now.

A-18. *The Chairman*: I notice that you suggest that some of these workers may become settlers when your scheme is completed?—Yes.

A-19. When your scheme is completed, will preference be given to those who have been engaged on constructional work?—No, I do not think there will be any particular preference shown. I think it is a question of economics. First of all the Bombay Government will, I presume, look after their own flock, that is the people within the confines of the Bombay Presidency. The people of whom I made particular mention are the Thakurs from the uplands of Gujarat, who are pretty badly off; they have a rather precarious rainfall, and they have gradually drifted to our works. Personally I would like to see them settled because they have stuck to their work throughout the year; they have not been frightened of the hot weather and have worked continuously for three years without going to their homes. It is obvious that these people have no attachment to their birth-place. That is probably due to economic reasons.

A-20. Can you tell us what is the number who would be settlers?—I think this particular people of whom I am speaking would number about 2,500. That is men, women and children. Everyone, of course, expresses a willingness to settle in this area, because they think they will get something for nothing; I think that is the general idea.

A-21. In your written evidence, dealing with health and sanitary arrangements, I notice that you say that except when water-borne epidemics are anticipated, or water is particularly scarce, no special arrangements are made on scattered works for a drinking water-supply, water being generally obtained from wells in the vicinity of the works?—Yes.

A-22. Are these wells tested to see that they are fit for drinking?—No. In India the people are very clever at finding out where they can get good water; an immediate enquiry is always made from the local residents as to which is the best well in the vicinity and you find everybody flocking to that particular well.

A-23. Yes, but in these days there are known to be such subtle differences in water that the best informed amateur or resident cannot always know whether or not there may be any infection in that water?—Quite so, but directly we see the smallest sign of anything wrong, our hospital assistant is on the spot, and we have the water tested. But it is generally known which is the good well; we have never had a case where a well said to be good has brought any harm to the people.

A-24. Would it be a matter of any great difficulty that periodical tests of water from wells should be made by the staff?—No, I do not think there would be any great difficulty. We could send down a sample of water to be tested at Karachi.

A-24a. I would make that suggestion for the greater security of the health of the workers?—Yes, I think it is a very good suggestion.

A-25. Then it might be possible to disallow drinking from wells which were dangerous to health?—Yes, in the case of wells you could do that.

A-26. You could have some notices put on those wells which had been tested and proved satisfactory?—I think we would have to put guards on. I do not think notices are much good in India. The people would drink the water first and read the notice afterwards.

A-27. I notice that you also say it is difficult to prevent the general body of labour from drinking direct from the river?—Yes, we have great difficulty in Sukkur, although we put guards all the way along. We generally put on an ex-soldier, and you will see him dashing along to stop a party from drinking from the river. Although they know they are not to drink from the river, and although a water-supply is provided for them, they will go to the river, have a wash and then drink from the river.

A-28. I recognize that difficulty: still a good deal could be done by patient education in the matter?—Yes, we give lectures to the people. We send our sanitary inspectors round the township; they tell the people why they should not drink this water and why they should get water from the proper source.

A-29. In your memorandum, you tell us that the bulk of the labour force on your scheme is not under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—That is so.

A-30. Would you further define the word "bulk", distinguishing those who are, from those who are not?—I should think 95 per cent. are not protected. The only protection afforded, as we will be able to show you at Sukkur, is to those employed in the mechanical workshop, the stone-dressing shop and those dealing with electric power. Those are the only people who come under the Act, because our stores and shops are scattered about and there are none in which more than 50 people work.

A-31. I notice with great satisfaction, however, that you go further than the law requires and you tell us that you deal with accidents which are not covered by the Act as if they were so covered?—Yes. The Act came into force after the work had started. Throughout my service as a constructional engineer I have always felt that there are a lot of very hard cases, and when the Act came into force I suggested to the Bombay

Government that, as an act of grace, we should give compensation to these people as if they came under the Act. We do it as a pure act of grace in every single case, and it is a thing that is greatly appreciated.

A-32. I take it that not every one responsible for such works in India is as liberal as you are?—No. It may be said that I am liberal with the taxpayers' money; but that is not the case. Perhaps people's outlook is different when they are handling their own money; they may not take the same liberal view that I take.

A-33. May I take it that your example shows that it would be possible to extend that Act?—I think it would be possible and it is desirable.

A-34. To cover such labour as you employ?—I would not say entirely, but certain further classes of labour ought to be covered. I think it would tend to retard 'the contractors' enterprise if it were made generally applicable to all miscellaneous labour under exposed conditions such as we have in Sind. I mean conditions which are not cramped as in factories. I think there should be some limitation. We should move gradually in the matter of extending the scope of the Act.

A-35. Have you any suggestions to make as to the class of labour which might be brought under the Act?—I will let you have a copy of my note on the subject to the Government of India. They have already raised the question of increasing the scope of the Act. I will make a point of sending it to your Secretary.

A-36. Thank you, that would be useful. You say: "No appreciable improvement in the efficiency of workers on the class of work dealt with by this scheme has been noticed in recent years." And then in reply to our further enquiry under that heading as to the possible methods of securing increased efficiency you say: "Education of the masses to take a greater pride in manual labour seems to me the only efficient means of obtaining greater efficiency." Do you know if there is any reward for increased efficiency, where men have been working for some period and have proved their efficiency, or are they all rewarded on one and the same level?—Not so. On this scheme we pick out the men. If we find that some men are working well, we pick them out and give them permanent employment in preference to temporary employment. For instance, there are men working on the dragline excavators and we have a certain amount of unskilled labour about the machines. If we find a smart and intelligent man, he is put on to the ground gang of the machines, where he gets paid very much better; he gets about 25 per cent. more than he would get as an ordinary labourer on the canals. That is how we try to increase the efficiency of our workmen.

A-37. Would it then be correct to say that any man who shows efficiency in his work has an opportunity of improving his position?—I would not put that forward as a general statement. So far as our works are concerned, such men are discovered and if they are likely to remain in Sind, they are at once taken up by us on an improved footing.

A-38. *Mr. Sasri*: What portion of your labour is contract labour and what portion direct labour for which you are responsible?—I have not the exact figures, but I should say that from 8 to 10 per cent. of the labour is employed directly by us.

A-39. Is this 8 to 10 per cent. direct labour more conveniently situated with regard to housing, medical relief and other facilities than the contract labour?—Yes, in theory but not in practice. We did not want an unlimited call on our medical resources, so we issued a notice that contractors would be responsible for the health of their people, that is to say for the ordinary distribution of quinine, etc. But in practice we do most of it ourselves, irrespective of whether it is Government labour or contract labour.

A-40. In respect of wages I suppose the advantage would be decisive?—Yes, I think on the whole, there is a decided advantage to the worker in Government service.

A-41. There is no leakage of wages in direct Government service?—There is a certain amount of leakage in the subordinate staff, which we try to stop. I think there must be some leakage but the people are quite willing to come on to our muster-roll.

A-42. What difference would it make to you if the whole of the labour were direct instead of contract?—We simply could not do it. You have to remember that the contractor runs a very great risk owing to the pernicious system of very heavy advances being given. People will not come without advances. Labour that comes from up-country and gradually drifts on to our muster is labour that has probably originally been brought down by the contractors. The labourer would have to work off the advance made to him by the contractor. Then he says "I hear the Government want a few hands; I will try to get on to the Government muster." To bring them down is a great responsibility. I have to take up the cudgels for the contractor on this point. He is very

often put to considerable loss owing to gangs of labour running away without reason. There is sometimes a reason, but we have had cases of gangs of men simply going away because they were tired of work and they have got away with rather big advances from the contractor.

A-43. I was trying to look at it rather from the point of view of the labourers themselves. Would there be a great improvement in the conditions if the labour were dealt with departmentally and not with the aid of contractors?—I think there would, decidedly.

A-44. But you think that change would be accompanied by great expense and inconvenience to Government?—It would certainly entail a great liability to Government. Whether that liability would ultimately become an expense one does not know. We should not have the extraordinary control that the contractor has over the labourer. The contractor is able to follow the runaway labourer back to his village and get him back again. We should require a very big organisation to enable us to do that.

A-45. You say in your statement that although it is not an obligation of Government, still medical relief is looked after by Government agencies?—Yes.

A-46. You do that rather as a matter of humanity and Governmental function than as a part of your responsibility for the labourer?—That is so.

A-47. If the contractor does not accept it as an obligation to look after them in that way you consider it to be a mere charity to do so. Are not the labourers in a difficult position? I was trying to view it from that point of view. Is it not desirable that a system should be devised by which they would be looked upon as somebody's concern? At present it is neither the contractor's nor the Government's responsibility?—Well, it is supposed to be the contractor's. I quite agree that it would be to the interests of the labourer to be definitely under somebody and, I should say preferably under Government. It is not an extraordinarily great liability. I could give figures. The cost of the medical organization on this scheme works out at roughly Rs. 80,000 a year. I happen to be looking after it myself. It might have gone up to two or three lakhs of rupees if we had allowed faddists to have their way. I have a scheme devised on practical lines from the layman's point of view. So far we have met all the calls made upon us and the cost is only Rs. 80,000 per year. That comes to about 0.25 per cent. of our annual expenditure.

A-48. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say in your written evidence under the head "Unemployment" that "there are definitely no good grounds for any unemployment problem in Sind." But we found on going round Karachi a great deal of unemployment. Yesterday when we visited the Port Trust workmen's houses we saw a great many workers who, we thought, ought to be working instead of sitting idle. What is the difference between the Sukkur Barrage workers and the coolie labourers here in Karachi? Why do not these unemployed workers go to the Sukkur Barrage works?—There is little or no difference. I do not know what sort of labour is referred to. For instance, were they *Mekranis*, because we employ a lot of *Mekranis*? But the men may not want to move, because they have been accustomed to doing purely dock labour or handling coal. We have got similar work to do in Sukkur and no greater exertion is required there than they have to undergo here (Karachi). In fact, the concentrated exertion of loading and unloading a ship is probably greater than the average spread over energy that we require from our people. So that there is no reason at all that I can see why they should not go up to Sukkur.

A-49. There is unemployment here in Karachi and you are seeking labour at Sukkur. Have you made any attempt to attract labour from here to Sukkur?—I think our contractors have, and they will probably make still further attempts, because this season we have a big programme and there is great shortage of labour.

A-50. So far as you personally know, there is no reason why hundreds of labourers here in need of employment should not go to Sukkur and be employed?—To me no apparent reason at all.

A-51. For instance we saw Pathans idling here in Karachi. They pass Sukkur on their way here?—Exactly.

A-52. Why do they not stay at Sukkur?—You probably refer to the *Barsati* Pathans. There are different kinds of Pathans; some only come seasonally, while others work all the year round away from their own country. These may be *Barsati* Pathans and they may think that the climate of Karachi is very much more comfortable than that of Sukkur in the hot weather.

A-53. Do you employ *Barsati* Pathans?—Yes, but not in large numbers. Throughout the year I do not think we have 500 *Barsati* Pathans on our works now, whereas we get as many as 15,000 to 20,000 Pathans on our works in the cold weather.

A-54. Generally speaking you do not see any reason why hundreds, if not thousands, of men who are at present unemployed at Karachi should not be employed at the Sukkur Barrage?—It appears to me there is no reason why they should not.

A-55. In your memorandum, dealing with the question of efficiency, you say: "Generally speaking the efficiency of the labourer is as it was 25 years ago but as the rate of wages has risen the value of work done for wages paid shows a distinct increase in costs".—That is so.

A-56. You have been connected with labour for many years. Can you give us statistical information showing the wages paid for different types of labour at different periods, to-day, 10, 15, or 25 years ago?—I can get that information and I shall be very pleased to supply that to the Commission. At present I have not got it here.

Chairman : Could we have it here when it is ready?—Yes, I shall get it and send it.

A-57. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You will please give a sort of graduated table showing the wages paid over a period of years and brought up-to-date as far as possible which will put the facts in a nutshell?—Yes, I shall get that information.

A-57a. Not general information.—No.

A-58. Similarly can you get anything to show the difference in the cost of living to-day from what it was some years back with regard to the coolies and other types of labour that you employ on construction works?—It would be difficult for me to get that information, but fairly accurate data can be got from the Director of the Labour Bureau in Bombay. I shall try and get that also and send it.

A-59. *Mr. Ahmed* : I understand Mr. Harrison, that you ordinarily pay your labour higher wages than are paid by the contractors?—Yes, that is correct.

A-60. You said in answer to the Chairman that swindling of labourers by the contractors is one of the chief reasons why the labourers who go home are not brought back by the contractor?—I did not say so.

A-61. At any rate the same contractors do not bring back the labourers who go home?—I think they very often do.

A-62. You said that the old workers do not generally return to the work once they go home.—I do not think I said that.

A-63. Do you get back the old workers?—Yes, I think a very large number come back. As I have mentioned in my written memorandum nothing spreads quicker in India than the news that a contractor is not treating his men properly. It is not any easy matter for the contractor to recruit labour if he has treated his men unfairly.

A-64. Do the contractors repatriate their coolies if they want to go home?—Yes. If a coolie does not run away the contractor always pays his return fare. Of course he cuts it out of his pay, but he arranges to keep money for his return ticket. He advances money to start with and buys the labourer's tickets. Of course he gets that money back, probably with interest. The contractor will always assist the labourer to get back to his home. I have not known of labourers being stranded when they have finished the work.

A-65. How do you know they get assistance?—Because I have never known them stranded.

A-66. Do you know for certain that they get money to go home?—That is what the contractors inform me and I have no reason to think it is not true. Otherwise there would be considerable numbers of people wandering about and sooner or later, it would come to our notice. All such abuses come to our notice. That is what I should call a major abuse, people being brought to a foreign country and left stranded. We should be bound to hear of that. If we did not hear, at least the District Officials would be bound to hear of it if a large number of labourers were stranded in that way. I am not speaking of isolated cases, but of anything in the nature of a general complaint.

A-67. Very often disputes between labourers and contractors regarding measurement create trouble. How are they settled?—They are generally settled by us, through our good offices, as I have mentioned in my statement.

A-68. How many such cases occur in a year?—They are not individual cases but are mass complaints. When I or my officers go on a particular work a body of men will come towards one and say, "Sahib, we have got a complaint to make." The officer will ask, "What is the complaint?" They will say that the contractor or the contractor's *jemadar* is in some way swindling them. If it is a case of the contractor's jemadar it is an easy matter, because we give the contractor an order not to employ that particular jemadar. That has a most salutary effect on the jemadars.

A-69. Have you got any officers deputed for the purpose of settling disputes between contractors and labourers?—All our subdivisional officers and all the subordinates on the works have distinct orders to see as far as possible that there is no swindling. We have no authority to look into the contractor's accounts; that is his own private concern.

A-70. Can you give us an idea of the rates the contractors pay their labourers as compared with the rates they get from you?—Yes, I can give you an idea. I discovered a few cases in which the contractor was able to get labour for extraordinarily low rates, rates much lower than we had ever heard of in Sind in recent years. In one case we were paying a contractor Rs. 8-4-0 per 1000 c.ft. of earth work, while he was actually paying the coolies only Rs. 4-12-0.

A-71. What is the difference?—Government contracts with the contractor and pay him Rs. 8-4-0 or Rs. 8-8-0 per 1000 c.ft. and from our enquiries we found that in one specific case the contractor was paying only Rs. 4-12-0 to the labourers. We are interested in these things, because in running this big scheme on commercial lines we are trying to cut out the big contractor and to get into direct touch with the small contractor. I find there is a big difference between what we pay the big and small contractor. So that it is to our interest to eliminate as far as possible the big contractors. To that end we always make enquiries regarding the rates paid by the contractors. Since we discovered that case last year, I have asked my officers particularly to enquire into this matter. I find in some cases there is very little margin of profit to the contractor.

A-72. Have you got any test cases so that we may be in a position to compare the wages paid by your contractors with the wages the labourers are getting elsewhere and to know the profits the contractors are making on the transaction?—No.

A-73. It is nearly 100 per cent. according to you in this case?—My experience in India is that, if I am to believe the contractors, they never make any profit at all. It would be very difficult to get that information.

A-74. In spite of that, the major portion of the work is done through the contractors?—Exactly so.

A-74a. Then the contractors are very philanthropic?—I can get certain information from my officers if you want it, as to large discrepancies in rates.

A-75. Do you write to any union or to people who supply labour in the vicinity of your work asking them to supply you with labour?—No. There are no such men to whom we can write. The jemadars are illiterate. There are no bureaux or anything of that kind.

A-76. Could not some of the labour unions supply you with labour?—No. I have never been approached by any labour union to give them work. I do not know any union sufficiently well to which I can apply with any useful prospects of getting co-operation.

A-77. Are not the rates given for labour supplied by the unions lower than the rates given to the contractors?—But will the labour unions take responsibility for the advances which have to be given to the labourers to get them to come to our works? That is our difficulty.

A-78. Have you asked whether they would undertake that responsibility?—No, I have had nothing to do with them. I have, up to certain limits, been able to carry on with the usual practice of using the contractor. If you could tell me of something better, I should be very pleased.

A-78a. You cannot prove from your books of account that many labourers have cheated the Government or the contractors; you have not got test cases?—Labourers cheating Government?

A-78b. Yes, taking advances and then not doing the work?—Government makes no advances.

A-78c. But the contractors?—The contractors give advances, yes.

A-79. How is it that the Government, without giving advances, can get a supply of labour?—The contractor gives very heavy advances; Government does not. As I mentioned just now, if it is foreign labour, it is generally brought down by the contractor, and it gradually drifts from the contractor on to our works. I am always stopping at attempts by our staff to take contractors' labour; but if the labourer has finished his work for the contractor and likes to come into our employ, we are glad to have him; it is, of course, such labour that has come to our works not at our cost or risk but at the contractor's cost and risk.

A-80. Your scheme is a very large scheme; probably the Sukkur Barrage scheme is the largest in India?—It is the largest of its kind in the world, I think.

A-81. I think you have spent some 18 to 20 crores ?—Up to the present day we have spent round about Rs. 10 crores.

A-82. And your scheme is so large that you will spend a much larger amount ?—Yes, 20 crores in all.

A-82a. Considering the amount you have spent and the still larger amount you are going to spend on the works, can you suggest better methods of obtaining supplies of labour ?—No, offhand I can make no suggestion for any better method of dealing with the labour force.

A-82b. After the experience you have had and in view of the fact that you have stated the high rate paid to the contractor with which you have compared the lower rate paid to the labourer, can you, for the benefit of labour, suggest any better methods of obtaining your supply of labour ?—No, I cannot see any—not without giving advances, and I cannot see that the State is justified in risking the taxpayers' money to that extent.

A-82c. Looking at the question from the point of view of the labourer, do you think it would be better to pay the labourer directly a higher wage rather than pay that higher rate to the contractor, who retains parts of it ?—If the labourer were paid the higher rate directly, I think it would work out in the end that Government would pay still higher rates than it pays at present. It is all a question of economics ; it is not a question of philanthropy at all.

A-83. Can you suggest any method by which the conditions of labour would be ameliorated by obtaining wages which might be higher than those paid by the contractor and yet possibly lower than that at present paid by Government to the contractor ?—No. I have already touched on that subject in my written evidence ; I have said what the methods are and what they might possibly be, and I have also spoken of the possibility of abuses.

A-84. How long have you been on this scheme ?—I have had 27 years experience of construction.

A-85. In view of that long experience, can you suggest any methods by which you could ameliorate the conditions of labour by paying them a slightly higher wage than the contractors have been paying, and at the same time decreasing the expense to Government ?—I have said yes—by Government shouldering the responsibility of making heavy advances.

A-86. Can you answer my question ?—I have said yes, provided Government is prepared to take the risk ; but, speaking as a responsible officer handling the taxpayers' money, I think we are not justified in doing that.

A-87. From the commercial point of view ?—Yes, from the commercial point of view.

A-88. Can you suggest any means of getting your supply of labour by payment of slightly higher wages than the wages the workers are at present receiving from the contractor ?—No.

A-88a. You see there is apparently a considerable margin between the rate paid by Government to the contractor and that paid by the contractor to the labourer ; there appears to be profiteering on the part of the contractor ; could you, therefore, pay the labourer a slightly higher wage than he is receiving at present from the contractor and at the same time pay the contractor rather less ; is there no scheme that you can suggest ?—No. I must repeat that that cannot be done without increasing the liability of Government.

A-89. *Mr. Cliff* : I presume that the written memorandum which you have submitted to this Commission has special reference to the Lloyd Barrage scheme ?—Yes.

A-90. May I suggest that you have addressed yourself to the problem rather as an engineer than an administrator ?—No, I am afraid my functions here at present are 70 per cent. those of an administrator and 30 per cent. those of an engineer.

A-91. Then may I take it in those proportions ?—I think so ; I have had to look at it very much from the administrative point of view.

A-92. Will you help me as to the class of labour on this scheme which is employed directly, which I think you said comprised 8 to 10 per cent. of the whole ?—Yes.

A-93. With regard to the class of labour that is employed directly and that employed through contractors, what is the distinction between the two classes of labour ; on what work are they engaged ?—For instance, on this scheme we employ a fair amount of labour in connection with the dragline machinery, the mechanical excavators ; practically all

those men are men we have worked up from the ordinary unskilled labourer class ; we have had to train all those men ourselves ; I believe that comprises the bulk. Then we have our workshop labour ; we have two workshops there : the ordinary workshop and one for the repair of the dragline excavator machinery. We have also a stone dressing shop. Those are all men employed by us. Wherever we can give them individual piece-work we do so ; otherwise they are on daily wage labour. The other class consists of ordinary unskilled labour used for miscellaneous duties. As I think I have made clear in my written memorandum, wherever it is possible to give out work on measurement piece-work we prefer to do that, rather than muster labourers and simply get what work we can out of them. There is a certain amount of work that has to be done, fetching and carrying, miscellaneous work, where Government has to keep muster rolls, where one cannot bring the work down to a form of measurement.

A-94. May I take it the second form of labour is labour employed by contractors ?—Yes, that is so.

A-95. May I take it that those who are directly employed on the draglines, the shops and the stonemason's yard are subject to the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—On the draglines, no ; but in the three shops I mentioned they are.

A-96. Are they at all subject to the Factory Act ?—The three shops, that is all, nothing else.

A-97. Will you give me the percentage of labour that is employed in the three shops apart from the draglines ?—I could get it for you by the time you go to Sukkur.

A-98. Can you give it to me approximately ?—The shops are very much less ; I should think the shops represent about 10 or 12 per cent. of such labour.

A-99. Ten or 12 per cent. of the 8 per cent. which is directly employed ?—Yes.

A-100. Is that the only labour which is subject to any protective statutory regulation on the scheme ?—That and anybody employed in the electrical part of the scheme. The electrical trade comes under the Workmen's Compensation Act, but nothing else does.

A-101. None of the other labour is subject to any statutory regulation at all ?—No.

A-102. As an engineer do you agree in principle with workmen's compensation ?—Yes, I do.

A-103. Do you agree with sickness insurance ?—I think I would—at present certainly in the abstract ; but I think it is a matter which would have to be gone into very carefully.

A-104. I am at the moment concerned with principles. May I ask if you agree in principle with unemployment insurance ?—As applied to India, no.

A-105. You do not agree with the principle of unemployment insurance ?—No.

A-106. But you do agree with the principle of workmen's compensation and sickness insurance ?—Yes.

A-107. Will you make clear the radius from which this contract labour is brought ; you have stated in your evidence certain places, but can you give me approximately the mileage ?—I should think all within 500 miles.

A-108. Of the Barrage scheme ?—No, some would be a little further ; it would be 500 miles generally speaking and probably 750 miles as the extreme limit. That is, of course, in bulk ; we have cases of people coming all the way from Madras and we have got them from Bhutan.

A-108a. An area of about 700 square miles ?—No, 700 miles radius.

A-109. Are advances in those cases an economic necessity ?—I take it they must be ; otherwise the contractor would probably be able to get his labour without giving advances. Up to a certain point they are an economic necessity. From my experience and the enquiries I have made, it is difficult to say whether it is a true economic necessity ; often the labourers get these advances and finish their season at home, they marry their daughters and their sons and then try and work off the advances. It is a debt they incur. I suppose it may be for domestic obligations rather than for absolute necessities.

A-110. Supposing the workman has to leave his home and travel say 100 miles, leaving his family, it is likely that he would want some money to pay his railway fare ?—Yes, he always gets that.

A-111. That is part of the advance ?—Yes, that is part of the advance ; he invariably gets that. That would be a very small part of the advance.

A-112. Would it be necessary for him to leave a small amount of money at home?—I think it would be convenient; otherwise he loses a certain amount by having to send it by money order and so on; there is a risk of losing it.

A-113. If he is driven to the Barrage scheme by economic necessity, is it not likely that some money would be required at home?—Yes, a small amount may be required at home; but, on the whole, I think the people rather gamble with these advances.

A-114. So that while a certain amount of the advance may be misused, there is an economic necessity underlying it?—Yes, I agree; but when it comes to 20 or 25 per cent. of a man's working capacity for a season, it strikes me as being rather a big advance.

A-115. Is it a fact that Government get this permanent regular labour force that they have by reason of the contractors having previously given the labourers advances to bring them to the scheme?—Yes. I am talking specifically of Sind, because in general Government can get its ordinary labour requirements on their musters from local labour.

A-116. I am confining my questions to Sind. Do you agree with the assumption underlying the question of Sir Alexander Murray that there were hundreds and possibly thousands unemployed in Karachi?—Yes, from what I hear trade is very slack now in Karachi; the shipping is not as great as it has been and there must be a fair amount of dock labour idle.

A-117. In your opinion would it be of any value to have a public employment agency for Karachi for the purpose of your scheme?—I have already mentioned that in my written memorandum.

A-118. Yes, I see that?—There are dangers in that. I would suggest there are dangers in connection with these public employment agencies.

A-119. Of course, there are dangers in many things?—Yes. I think it is a very real danger in this country.

A-120. I understand contractors do scout for labour in Karachi?—To a very small extent in Karachi; they will not come to Karachi. They will send their men straight off to the Mekran to get their labourers from their homes; they will not trouble to get any appreciable amount of their labour from Karachi.

A-121. With regard to the rapidity with which information respecting grievances spreads, might I suggest that information respecting good conditions would spread with even greater rapidity?—Yes, it would.

A-122. Have you heard much about the good conditions on the Barrage scheme?—Yes. I can put my fingers very quickly on the contractors who deal fairly and squarely with their labour.

A-123. Does it mean that in the districts from which those contractors obtain labour there is no difficulty with regard to the supply?—That is so.

A-124. Sir Alexander Murray asked for statistics with regard to the comparative rates of wages paid. Do those rates of wages only apply to the direct labour employed by the Government?—There is not a very great variation between the Government profit, constituted in money. Of course it means a great deal to the man himself. For instance, in Sind we can muster men from 12 to 14 annas per day, whereas we know the contractor gets them at about 10 annas. There is that 2 to 3 annas difference a day, which makes all the difference.

A-125. Can you supply the Commission, with any degree of surety, with a table in regard to the rates of wages paid by contractors?—I can give you that. The contractor pays on the piece-work system. I can give it in those terms.

A-126. There are records?—Only from our enquiries. We have made careful enquiries. There is no method by which we can examine contractors' books.

A-127. There is no record in existence which would show that?—No, but I can give you certain figures.

A-128. I take it that you pay at so much per thousand cubic feet?—Yes.

A-129. Would it be possible to tell us what is the labour cost now per thousand cubic feet compared with the labour cost per thousand cubic feet twenty years ago?—Yes; I could get that.

A-130. In your memorandum under the head "Industrial efficiency of workers" you say "Twenty years ago mechanical excavators, for instance, could not compete with labour. It has now been proved that for earthwork in heavy bulk mechanical excavators

can more than hold their own against manual labour". Will you explain that to me?—I can give you a very good example. Twenty years ago I was constructing a very big dam near Igatpuri. I worked out the question of cost, using mechanical aid. I found that the only two things I could afford to buy mechanically were three portable engines, pans for mixing mortar, and some light railway trucks which were pushed by manual labour. I could not even afford to buy light tractors to pull the trucks. Contractors came out from England to inspect that work, and they said it seemed a very extraordinary thing that I could not do the work by mechanical means. I pointed out that mechanical means could not possibly compete with the then wages of labour. When this scheme was started we worked out the question, and, based on rates that were then being paid in Sind, we found that mechanical excavators won hands down. The comparison then—five years ago—was very much more in favour of mechanical excavators than it is to-day, because by bringing in mechanical excavators we reduced the cost of hand labour.

A-131. Relating to workmen's compensation, have you any records with regard to the contractors paying compensation?—My Superintending Engineers have. There are several cases in which big contractors have come up and asked "What shall I pay the man?" The smaller contractor says "I am sorry I cannot do anything". We have had two or three cases where they have actually paid compensation. Very few cases so far have occurred in the contract labour, because it is not the most difficult form of labour. The dangerous part of our work is done by departmental labour.

A-132. But for another purpose you are proposing to increase the small contractors as against the large contractors?—Yes. I am giving you that not for any outside reasons but purely from the economic point of view, which must control my actions as safeguarding the public purse.

A-133. Do you consider that the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act should not have been repealed?—I would rather have seen it modified than repealed, because it leads to a battle of wits now, which is not to the benefit of either party.

The Chairman : I have not heard of any suggestion of re-enactment.

A-134. *Mr. Cliff* : Can you tell me what is being done to train labour on your scheme?—Yes. On a scheme of this sort we have never been able to get sufficient skilled labour to meet our requirements. Therefore we have had to train it in every shape and form from purely raw material. We have gradually trained the people up step by step. If it is within their means to learn, we have tried to teach them wherever we have had to do departmental works. This work has been a great technical school, and was remarked on by Sir John Simon.

A-135. Is it proving profitable?—It is profitable to us in that way—to teach the people the methods we want them to follow, and it gives them a very much higher market value when they leave the works.

A-136. Are you in favour of its expansion?—Yes. If we can take the opportunity of training people on works, it is better than trying to start small schools and "half-baked" institutions.

(At this point, the witness's oral evidence was adjourned until the Commission's visit to Sukkur.)

**Mr. T. S. DOWNIE, O.B.E., Chairman, and Mr. JAMSHED
N. R. MEHTA, Vice-Chairman, Karachi Port Trust.**

A-137. *The Chairman* : Mr. Downie, may I first express my own sympathy with you and your Trust at the present condition of your export trade, and at the serious diminution which you have recently experienced; and also express the hope that it is only a temporary depression and that it may recover to something like its maximum period. It certainly is a serious thing you have to face—a fall from 2,070,000 tons to 660,000 tons in a period of four years. You have put before us a very interesting statement covering the conditions of employment within your sphere, and also the housing, as far as it goes, of your employees. We had the pleasure of inspecting some of the workers' houses yesterday. In your memorandum you tell us that the question of inducing employers of labour to acquire sites on which to build quarters for their workmen has been taken up, and that negotiations are on hand towards that end. Would you say what you mean by "negotiations", and with whom?—We have approached employers of labour, such as stevedores and members of firms who house their labour in the village at Keamari, and have informed them that we consider that at this time they should build houses for their own labour, and that the Port Trust have so far decided not to build any more houses.

We have offered them sites beyond the village on reclaimed land, which they may acquire on specified terms. This has taken some considerable time because of the present depression of trade, and the reply of the stevedores and employers was that they were financially not in a position to erect houses, and that the matter might stay for a time until the trade of the Port improved, so that people would then be financially in a position to acquire those sites and to build such houses. That is what is meant by "negotiations".

A-138. You say that "The Port Trust have under consideration the reconstruction of a large number of the houses which were built many years ago and propose in due course to take this work in hand". Is that necessarily to wait for an improvement in trade?—Yes, sir. The question was gone into and it was felt that a better class of houses, or a different class, should be built to meet modern requirements. The proposal was to totally rebuild, and the question was gone into and reported on by the Engineer that houses could be reconstructed at a very much less cost and it was decided, in the first instance, to put up one or two model houses, which have been put up, and to subsequently start a building programme of reconstruction extending over a number of years. For financial reasons also that has not been pushed forward.

A-139. Referring to Workmen's Compensation you tell us that your Trust does not confine itself to its legal obligations under the Act but that you do grant compensation on the lines of the Act to all your employees who may be injured or killed in the execution of their duty?—That is correct. The number of employees under the Workmen's Compensation Act is very limited. But all employees who are injured or killed get the same compensation as if they were under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

A-140. I take it you would not object to other employers doing what you do to your own men, that is to say, extending the provisions of the Act to cover every class of employees?—No.

A-141. With regard to periods of payment of wages, have you considered the possibility of paying all your men at shorter intervals than appears to be the custom, namely, the monthly system?—We had a representation from Government, sir, two or three years ago and we went into the matter and improved it by accelerating payments. In cases where men were being paid once in ten days we probably reduced it to seven days. People who were paid monthly preferred to be paid so; they did not want to be paid weekly. We had no complaint about the period of payment. The only complaint we had was that the payment should be made quicker, that is soon after the end of each month or week as the case might be.

A-142. Do you not think that they would prefer a shorter period of payment instead of monthly payment?—I do not know. As far as I can make out they do all their payments in monthly instalments and they seem to prefer it. We had no complaints that they would like it paid fortnightly or weekly. Probably Mr. Mehta may be in a position to say. (Mr. Jamshed N. R. Mehta): My personal opinion is that they would prefer weekly payment.

A-143. Mr. Downie, can you tell us whether it would be difficult for you to make weekly payments?—(Mr. Downie): None whatever.

A-144. It could be done?—Yes.

A-145. And presumably to that extent it would relieve the recourse of the workmen to outside agencies to obtain money for expenditure during the period?—I doubt that. My opinion is that they would probably spend the money and not discharge their obligations. At the end of each month, as far as I am able to ascertain, the man is surrounded by his creditors who know that he has got money and so they get it from him. If he is paid fortnightly or weekly I am afraid he might use it for other purposes and not pay his debts. That is my own impression.

A-146. I think it would be our duty to consider that question?—Mr. Mehta is in a better position to speak on this subject and I quite agree with what he says. (Mr. Jamshed N. R. Mehta): There is a remedy. If the Port Trust starts a co-operative credit society for them the remedy would be very simple. I quite see Mr. Downie's point, but it is not impossible to check it. These people could be got out of their debt by starting a co-operative credit society of the Port Trust for the workers. The experiment can be tried and encouraged by a body like the Port Trust.

A-147. You think that the two things ought to go together—a shorter period of payment combined with the establishment of a satisfactory co-operative credit system?—Yes.

A-148. Would that not need in its inception some personnel officer who would take a special interest to see that it did succeed?—I am in favour of having a personnel officer; I think that is necessary. If he encourages it it is bound to be a success.

A-149. You suggest that the Port Trust is a particularly favourable body for trying such an experiment?—Very favourable.

A-150. *Miss Power* : I see that you mention that in the case of fines and unclaimed wages these are credited to the Port Trust. Do you think it will be possible to make use of such sums in some form of welfare work?—(Mr. Downie) : They are very trifling. I think the fines come to about Rs. 100 a year. They are not very substantial.

A-151. What about the unclaimed wages? Are they not a substantial sum?—Only occasionally they are unclaimed. They are not large. The amounts are trifling. In fact they are so trifling that we had no necessity to consider what to do with these amounts. The fines are very small and the wages are not claimed only occasionally; it may be a sum of Rs. 200 or 300.

A-152. Do the unclaimed wages arise from a man having to return to his village hurriedly and being unable to claim his pay prior to the pay day?—They disappear; they go on leave and never come back.

A-153. Without having put in any claim?—No. We treat it as unclaimed money.

A-154. What is the interval for the workers on the night shifts in the shipping?—According to hours. There is no interval. They work from 7-30 p.m. to 6-30 a.m. In actual practice the men take turns, going off for a few spells. They cannot work right through without a break and they arrange that amongst themselves.

A-155. What is the interval they actually take under that arrangement?—It is merely a matter of arrangement with the headman; there is no specific time laid down.

A-156. In your memorandum you refer to the question of the reduction of hours of the workers having been postponed pending certain improvements. I am afraid I do not quite follow what the improvements are which would affect this question from the workers' point of view?—It is rather a difficult matter. When the question was brought up a large portion of the traders of the place were against reduction in hours. They thought that the time was inopportune for doing so and felt, as far as I can remember, that when we got the new conditions of working which we are likely to establish in the West Wharf, that is the new part of the harbour, they would be in a better position to see what the result of reducing the hours would be than what they were at that particular time.

A-157. Is there likely to be a considerable interval before there are any improvements?—We hope to open the first of the West Wharf piers by this time next year, and to work under different conditions from those in the past. It is rather a technical thing, but I can explain to you if you so desire.

A-158. You think it will result in the possibility of being able to alter the shift times?—I cannot say. The Port Trust had put it forward to the various chambers, stevedores and others concerned and asked them for their opinion on the matter of reduction of hours. The Indian Chambers favoured reduction, but the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and the stevedores who are mostly the employers of the labour concerned were very much against it and were unable to see any necessity for reduction and the Board accepted that view and postponed further consideration of the matter.

A-159. I understand that you are very slack just now?—Very slack indeed.

A-160. Then this should be rather an opportune time to try the experiment in the reduction of hours, might it not?—No, this is just the time when they want to work more; people would like to work for 24 hours if they could get it. There will be no trouble about the working hours now. When we are busy and when trade is carried on at a pressure, is the time to reduce the working hours.

A-161. My point is that if you are slack now you will be employing more people in the bulk on shorter shifts?—That depends upon the number of days the ship stays. For instance, in busy times we keep it only for three days. If there is no particular hurry and the ship stays for eight days, the number of men employed is naturally less. That is the trouble. It is work that we want here.

A-162. Referring to your housing scheme, you state that there has had to be an increase in the rents lately. I take it that at the same time there has also been a decrease in wages?—It is not a decrease in wages, but a decrease in work. We were having a loss of about Rs. 30,000 per annum for several years, and a year or two ago it was decided that we must do something to get some more money, and the rents were put up about 10 per cent., that is, just about the standard rate under the Rent Act.

A-163. Has there been an appreciable exodus of people from your own housing schemes since the increase of rents?—No. The only thing I know is that a lot of people said that

rather than pay this rent they would go back to their mud huts ; and a certain number of them have gone and erected huts on land which we are not quite sure belongs to the municipality or to the Port Trust.

A-164. More people would be taken in in order to lessen to the renter the cost of the increased rent ?—Very possibly they would take in more lodgers.

A-165. You do not in any way control the condition of workers who are contracted for through the contractors you employ ?—No.

A-166. Would there be any possibility of putting into the contract which you make with the contractors for coaling, the necessity for their complying with certain legislation affecting, for instance, the use of children on that work and the age at which children shall start on that work ?—That is rather outside our province. Mostly coaling is done in the stream and I do not know whether legally we have any authority over this. In the case of the vessels on the wharfs we have laid down conditions ; no one under 15 is employed in Port Trust works.

A-167. Have you any method of inspection to see that that is carried out ?—The staff inspect it every day ; if they see a youth under 15 the stevedore will be told to take him away.

A-168. Is it not necessary that the plinth of the houses for workers should be at least three feet from the ground ?—I think it would be a great improvement, but I do not think it is necessary.

A-169. Should not there be some provision for recreation of workers ?—I would be very glad to see that they have recreation. But if I understand that you wish the Port Trust to provide the recreation, I do not agree with that.

A-170. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Why not ?—It is not my duty to provide recreation for the workers. They can manage their own recreation as other people do. That is my reason.

A-171. You sometimes provide free houses for them. It is not your duty to provide free recreation ?—Excuse me, we provide free houses for specific jobs, to people who it is necessary should live near their work. For other people we do not provide free houses. They have to pay rent. Free housing is provided for specific purposes. But recreation and work in my opinion are two entirely different matters.

A-172. *Mr. Birla* : Mr. Downie, you refer to the depression in the export trade. Is it peculiar to the export trade or to the import trade as well ?—Entirely to the export trade. The import trade is very good.

A-173. Can you explain the reason why particularly the export trade has been affected ?—Owing to the reasons which have led to wheat not being exported.

A-174. What are your chief items of export ?—Wheat and seeds.

A-175. And Cotton ?—Cotton has now become the chief export. For some time wheat and seeds predominated. Now wheat and seeds have gone down, and cotton pre dominates.

A-176. Can you tell me out of the 20 lakhs of tons of export what is the quantity of wheat and grain that is exported ?—Putting it roughly, 100,000 tons of other commodities and the balance wheat and seeds. For instance, in 1924-25 we exported 1,200,000 tons of wheat alone, and previous to the war one and a quarter million has been exported in a year.

A-177. So it is on account of the fall in the export of wheat and seeds that your trade has fallen ?—Wheat and seeds are the principal items which have gone down.

A-178. Can you explain the reason for this fall ? Is it due to famine ?—I cannot say. I have been told that the reason of the wheat export going down is that people in India are consuming more wheat than they used to do ; also that the prices of Indian wheat will not compare with the prices of Australian, Canadian or Argentine wheat, and they cannot get a market for it.

A-179. It is not entirely due to any shortage of crops ?—No, it is in fact due wholly to internal consumption.

A-180. You suggest that the internal consumption has increased ?—I understand it has.

A-181. Do you think it has anything to do with the appreciation of the value of the rupee ?—I am not prepared to give an opinion.

A-182. You think that the appreciation of the rupee value has hit the Punjab agriculturists ? Is that your suggestion ?—I am not in a position to give an opinion on this matter.

A-183. You tell us about the housing conditions and the hesitation of the occupiers to pay the rent. Could you tell us the approximate cost of constructing a house, say 10' by 10', in Karachi?—We have got small houses which include two rooms and a verandah.

A-184. What is the area?—I can give you the area of the houses. The small houses consist of a verandah 14' × 6', one room 14' × 10', another 5' × 5' and another 14' × 10'. The value of that was originally Rs. 450 a house. That was many years ago.

A-185. Do you think the cost has increased considerably?—We have spent a very large amount on repairs.

A-186. What I am trying to get at is whether the cost of construction here is in any way higher than in Bombay or Calcutta?—The cost of building in Karachi is very much cheaper than in Bombay or Calcutta.

A-187. Then what is the reason of the hesitation of your occupiers to pay a rent of Rs. 3 or Rs. 4; it is not a very high rent for rooms of that size?—I cannot tell what the reason is. I suppose they have not the money.

A-188. Money is spent on health and education. Do you confine your activities to the labour alone, or do you spend money for your higher staff, on the education and health of your clerical staff?—We maintain two medical officers, who are confined to people who are generally getting less than Rs. 300. On the Manora side we have a medical officer who attends to every one. On the Manore side we also provide a school for Port Trust children. On the Karachi side there is a large number of municipal schools, both in Keamari and Karachi. To the Port Trust employees who send their children to Karachi we pay the tram hire.

A-189. What I wanted to know was whether you maintain these schools for the benefit of the labouring classes or for the clerical staff?—We maintain only one school, that is at Manora, and that is for all the Port Trust employees who would like to send their children to it.

A-190. How many boys attend that school?—About 35.

A-191. Do you think that is a quite satisfactory condition of affairs?—Well, that is all that there are about the place. The main body of Port Trust employees live in Karachi, and there they obtain the benefits of the municipal schools, a large number of which are to be found in Keamari and Karachi.

A-192. Mr. Mehta just now suggested the advisability of starting a co-operative system?—I have not considered the question. I should like to consider the matter.

A-193. Do you come across cases of swindling by your contractors?—No, I am not aware of any such cases. I have not come across any case of swindling.

A-194. Do you think the contractors deal fairly with the labourers?—I am not in a position to say.

A-195. Can you give us the margin of profit which the contractor makes; the rates you pay to the contractor, and the rates that the contractors pay to the work-people?—I cannot tell you.

A-196. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Would you make the enquiry and let us know?—I have not the means of finding it out.

A-197. *Mr. Birla*: I understand that you have been subscribing to the Red Cross Association. Do you think they maintain any *dais* for the benefit of the Indian women?—I understand they maintain qualified nurses at Keamari, who instruct the women. We subscribe and they do the work.

A-198. You will perhaps agree with me that the qualified nurses, unless they are Indians, are not very easily accessible to the working classes, and therefore I wanted to know whether you have made any condition that the Red Cross Society, on account of the subscription which they receive from you, should maintain more Indian *dais*, for the benefit of the Indian working classes?—We have made no condition at all. We merely subscribe, and leave the Red Cross to do their own work.

A-199. Do they maintain, or not, an Indian *dai*?—I could not tell you.

A-200. *Mr. Clow*: What is the procedure with regard to the reporting of accidents?—All serious accidents are reported to the Collector of Karachi and to the police immediately and, of course, to myself. It is left for the Collector of Karachi or the police to take any action that is necessary in the matter.

A-201. Who conducts the investigation of the accidents?—That is left for the police working under the District Magistrate, the Collector of Karachi.

A-202. Are there any technical men corresponding to the Inspector of factories with technical experience of machinery and accidents to conduct investigations into accidents?—I do not know. We hand the matter entirely over to the police.

A-203. I should like to ask you one question arising out of Mr. Harrison's evidence to which you have listened. We got the impression yesterday that there was not perhaps as much of unemployment as of under-employment in Karachi. Large number of men clamoured that they could not get sufficient work in Karachi. Is that the case?—Undoubtedly.

A-204. Mr. Harrison tells us that he cannot get a full supply of labour all through the year and that he finds it very difficult to progress with his work especially at special seasons. Will these men here be willing to go to Sukkur for employment if they get a chance?—I should be very doubtful about the class of men you saw yesterday. Most of them are trained dock workers with the exception of probably two or three experienced hands who might get better wages at the Sukkur Barrage. They generally stick to Karachi or go to their own homes.

A-205. The unskilled workers we saw, Mr. Harrison says, are perfectly capable of being employed at Sukkur?—You cannot call them unskilled because the dock labourer is a skilled man in his own particular way. We want very good men for that class of work. An ordinary man is no use. These men work here for years and then probably go home for a year or two and come back. Employment as dock labourer is limited to men with a certain amount of skill. There are of course others who do a certain amount of skilled work here. Dealing with sugar, for instance, we use the Mekrani labour which is bigger in structure and can do the work. With regard to imports, men from the Punjab are used because they are bigger. For the ordinary work of pack carrying, coolies are employed.

A-206. There is no considerable amount of unskilled labour unemployed in Karachi? By the word, 'unskilled' I refer to the labourer with no particular degree of aptitude in anything?—There must be a good deal of unemployment owing to the trade depression. For instance, we are not doing any work on the west wharf. We might have a thousand men doing odd jobs there. They are not being employed now.

A-207. The point I really want to get at is this. Is it a case of the unwillingness of the labourer to go to Sukkur; or is it a case of the ignorance of the worker as to the place where work can be got?—I am not in a position to answer that. (Mr. Mehta): I can say, sir, that it is due to the ignorance of the labourers. If they were told that there is work obtainable at Sukkur and that they would get so much wages they would willingly go.

A-208. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In your memorandum dealing with "housing conditions" you say that the Port Trust have constructed 800 houses for the accommodation of the labourers at Keamari. This accommodation is not for the entire labour force of the Port Trust. It is only for a limited number?—Yes. What happens about the others is this. Many of our men like others prefer to live in Karachi and they go and live in Karachi. Consequently these houses became empty and in course of time they have been filled up by outsiders as well as Port Trust employees. Out of about 800 houses only about 259 are really occupied by Port Trust employees.

A-209. And the balance is occupied by non-Port Trust employees?—Not connected with work of the Port Trust. For instance, stevedores' labour probably live in it. The oil company's labour live in it.

A-210. In some way connected with the port?—Connected with the work of the port, but not directly connected with the Port Trust.

A-211. In the matter of charging rents do you make any distinction between tenants who are in Port Trust service and those who are not?—We make no distinction. We have a number of houses in the village. We give free quarters for our staff, but the others are on the same basis whether they are Port Trust employees or outsiders.

A-212. With regard to the question of rents you say that the policy of the Port Trust is to levy minimum rates for these houses. What do you mean by minimum rates?—Such rates that we can charge without losing money. As I have already said we lose nearly Rs. 30,000 a year on the average, so that all the rents are not really remunerative yet.

A-213. How do you make out that loss? Do you charge any interest on the cost of construction, and if so, at what rate?—Yes, we charge an interest at 6 per cent. on the cost of construction and include depreciation also. We do not include the land value. We include the cost of the supply of water, the amount of taxes that we have to pay to the Municipality and all this works out to about Rs. 20,000 loss every year.

A-213a. What is the rate of interest you charge?—Six per cent.

A-214. What is the total amount you have spent ?—I have not got the figures here at present.

A-215. If this loss is eliminated from the calculation, by how much would the rate of interest on the cost of construction be reduced ?—We have not worked that out.

A-216. I want to find out whether, instead of working out at 6 per cent., you worked out at 4 per cent. or 5 per cent., there would be no loss on the capital invested in construction ?—I have got here the capital cost on the average including depreciation and interest and if we omitted it from our calculations we would be losing about Rs. 10,000.

A-217. What is the amount of interest debited now ?—Rs. 29,000 to 30,000.

A-218. Is that your total loss ?—No, it is Rs. 20,000 to 30,000.

A-219. If your loss is Rs. 20,000 before and if you eliminate it now, you would still get Rs. 10,000 ; but if your loss was Rs. 30,000 you would get no return on the capital invested. You are charging rents from Rs. 5 to Rs. 9-8-0. On what basis are these rents fixed ?—A statement is worked out on the basis of the original cost, the present rental value, the value of the land and so on. It has all been worked out before.

A-220. How do these rents compare with those of similar accommodation in other parts of Karachi ?—They are a gift ; they are no rents at all. For similar houses situated in Karachi we can get three times the rent.

A-221. Is that the reason why there is so much over-crowding ?—I do not know whether that is the reason. People will take in other people and we cannot keep them out. The accommodation provided in each house consists of three rooms and you would not get one room in Karachi for the same rent. We think it is a mistake to have the rents so low.

A-222. Is that not a liability on the funds of the Port Trust ?—Yes, on the funds of the Port Trust.

A-223. Is the Port Trust satisfied that it is a legitimate liability on their part to let those houses at low rents to people who are not in the employ of the Port Trust ?—We cannot get them out.

A-224. Have the Port Trust considered that aspect of the question ?—The matter has been discussed on various occasions and as I said before, they came to the conclusion that they would build no more houses but get the employers of labour to build their own houses and give them sites for the purpose. Because they saw that it was uneconomic.

A-225. How do you explain the fact that men in Port Trust service entitled to accommodation which they could get at one-third of the rents obtaining in Karachi do not occupy it but allow others to do so ?—I am talking of the situation about a number of years ago. At present the whole of the accommodation is not occupied by Port Trust labourers. Only about 200 houses are occupied by them. Whenever a house becomes vacant, which is very seldom the case, we allot it to a Port Trust employee. This is the rule that we have been following for some years past. It is going to take many years before the whole accommodation is occupied by the Port Trust employees.

A-226. These houses have been built for the benefit of the Port Trust employees at Port Trust expenses ?—I cannot say they were built specially for Port Trust employees.

A-227. Then what justification is there for your charging only one-third rent compared with what similar accommodation fetches in Karachi ?—The difficulty is this. The rents were fixed some twenty or thirty years ago and we have not increased them in the way the other landlords in the city have done. That is one reason why the rents are so low.

A-228. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Mr. Downie, was a representation made by the tally clerks to introduce a shift system for their staff ?—Yes.

A-229. Was the matter considered by your Board ?—Yes.

A-230. Did the Board unanimously recommend a reduction in hours originally ?—No, the Board referred the matter to the various Chambers of Commerce and employers of labour for opinion.

A-231. Did they at any time unanimously recommend reduction in hours as a body ?—I am speaking from memory and to the best of my recollection no decision was come to. The matter was referred, as I said, to the various Chambers of Commerce and employers of labour in Karachi for opinion.

A-232. Is it a fact that the European Chamber of Commerce at first viewed the proposal favourably?—I do not think it is correct to say that.

A-233. Can you, Mr. Mehta, throw any light on the matter?—I was not in the Port Trust at that time. I came in afterwards.

The Chairman: I think, Mr. Mehta has made some reference to it in his evidence and we shall examine him in the afternoon.

A-234. *Diwan Chaman Lall*:—I take it that you are not in a position to give me detailed information about it?—I think what I gave is the correct information.

A-235. My information is that the Board viewed the proposal favourably.—I am only talking on the resolutions passed by the Board. I do not know what happened at informal meetings of the Board. The resolution only says that the matter was referred to the various Chambers for opinion.

A-236. Am I right in taking it that the opposition to this came from Messrs Forbes, Forbes, Campbell and Co.?—The opposition to it came from the Chamber of Commerce and from the stevedores of the port.

A-237. The Indian Chambers unanimously agreed?—Yes, they agreed.

A-238. Is it a fact that the working hours in Bombay in the Port Trust are shorter than the working hours in Karachi?—It is a fact.

A-239. How does the efficiency of the Bombay worker compare with the Karachi worker in regard to work?—Very small and very poor comparatively.

A-240. Have you got any statistics which can show that?—No detailed statistics; only my knowledge of the work done in both places.

A-241. Is that your opinion?—My opinion based on the knowledge of the working in both ports. We work far better in this port.

A-242. But you have no statistics?—No.

A-243. What is the constitution of the Boards?—Four members are appointed by the Karachi Chambers of Commerce, two by the Buyers and Shippers' Association, four by Government, including one representative of the N. W. Rly. and one of the military Department, one by the Karachi municipality and two by the Karachi Indian Merchants Association.

A-244. Is there any representative of labour?—There is a nominated member.

A-245. Has there been a great deal of agitation on the part of the workers or their representatives demanding representation of labour on a better scale?—I have heard that such is the case.

A-246. You yourself personally would not be averse to seeing labour properly represented on the Board?—My personal opinion is that one labour representative is quite sufficient for the size of this place.

A-247. Do you agree with the method of putting the labour representative on the Board by nomination?—As far as I know it has worked satisfactorily; in other words, I agree with it.

A-248. Who is the representative of labour?—He is a gentleman called Mr. Merayab Khan.

A-249. Is he connected in any way with labour?—Not that I know of.

A-250. You are aware that the Port Trust Labour Union and other labour organizations in Karachi have looked upon this nomination unfavourably?—I have understood that.

A-251. You said that the rents of these quarters at Keamari which are owned by the Port Trust were increased; can you give me the average of the increase during the last few years?—Yes, Rs. 4 houses were increased to Rs. 5.

A-252. I will put it to you and perhaps you might correct me as I go along. The original rent of the small houses was Rs. 1-12-0 several years ago?—About 40 or 50 years ago.

A-253. Did you have any houses 50 years ago?—Yes, a lot of houses.

A-254. When was the rent Rs. 1-12-0?—I have not got that on my list; that is very remote time.

A-255. Which is the lowest you have got?—The lowest rent that I have got here is Rs. 4-2-0 for the smallest house.

A-256. What date was that?—That goes back a good many years 10 or 15 years. I have not got anything before that.

257. Is that a small house?—The very smallest houses—Rs. 4-2-0.
258. And what is it paying now?—Rs. 5. That was in existence I should say in 1900, Rs. 4-2-0.
259. When was the last increase in the rent?—About a year ago.
260. Was there any increase in wages at that time?—No.
261. We will take the mat houses of Keamari; do you think they are fit for human beings to live in?—Well, I quite agree they are very unsightly; but their history is rather peculiar. I presume you refer to those at the end of the village; I think you saw them; not there. We put up about 10 lines of huts during the time we had plague here, but when plague occurred at any house the families could be turned out and could not stay in the mat houses pending disinfection of their houses. The plague died away but the mat houses remained. The question arose: shall we pull them down? As many people came along to me and said: "Sahib, we are very willing to take this house", I said: "Very well, you can all have them at Rs. 1-8-0 a month." They were filled up, but that is the reason of those houses. Since they have been built, about 5 lines have been turned down and we have not erected any more. It is quite likely those existing have been turned down in the course of the next few months and there will be no more built.
262. Am I right in saying that the space in these mat huts is about 10 feet by 10 feet?—I should say so.
263. Am I correct in saying that the average prisoner in one of His Majesty's prisons occupies a cell 10 feet by 10 feet all to himself?—I am not in a position to say.
264. Is there any wage-fixing machinery available for the purposes of the Port Trust?—No.
265. Would you personally be averse to the fixation of wages through some minimum wage-fixing machinery?—I do not quite gather what you mean by that.
266. There is a proposal before the Government of India, as a result of the International Labour Conference last year to set up minimum wage-fixing machinery; would you not be averse to that?—No; we generally fall in with the views of Government on these matters.
267. In regard to these porters you say in your written memorandum that suitable quarters are provided by the Karachi Port Trust?—That is so.
268. Is it a fact that some of your accommodation at Keamari has been condemned by the Health Officer?—I am not aware of it.
269. That is a fact. You do not consider those satisfactory?—I am not aware of any houses that have been condemned that have not been brought to my notice. It has not been represented to the Port Trust officially.
270. You are the head of the Department and I take it that if a serious matter like this has not been reported to you, there must be something wrong with the constitution of the Port Trust. It is incorrect. It has not been brought to my notice as head of the Port Trust, but it should have been if there was anything wrong, and therefore I cannot answer any questions on that.
271. Then I will not pursue the matter, but from the information I have obtained from the Health Officer himself, it is so. You do not consider that those mat huts are satisfactory?—Of course not.
272. Is it a fact that many of your Port Trust workers are living at Lyari?—I would think it is, yes.
273. And is it also the fact that they are living in mat huts at Lyari?—I do not know the conditions there.
274. Have you been there?—I have been there, but I am not acquainted with the conditions there.
275. A great deal of the accommodation is mat hut accommodation?—I think it is.
276. Many of your workers are living there?—Very probably.
277. You would not consider that accommodation satisfactory?—Until I see the conditions, I really could not say. I want to know the reasons why they are living there; they may prefer to live there.
278. You have no officer of the Port Trust who is in charge of the inspection of the accommodation of your workers?—Of our own village, of our own Port Trust accommodation—not outside.
279. Not outside?—That is municipal organization.

A-280. Would it not be desirable to have someone in charge?—I cannot go in and inspect outside houses belonging to the municipality; my jurisdiction only applies to the Port Trust, not the municipal arrangements.

A-281. But if it is a fact that many of your workers are living in mat huts of more or less the same types as the mat huts to be found at Keamari, you would not consider that accommodation satisfactory?—No: certainly not.

A-282. Could you give me any idea as to the indebtedness of the workers of the Port Trust?—I could not.

A-283. Have you got a seamen's rest house?—There is a seamen's rest house; it is not the property of the Port Trust.

A-284. Under the Port Trust Act are you not supposed to provide a seamen's rest house?—We are supposed to contribute; we contributed towards the cost of it and contributions were received locally. No one knows who the building belongs to. The only thing is we keep it in repair out of Port Trust funds and maintain it.

A-285. Are any Indians eligible?—All grades and castes are eligible.

A-286. Do Indians make use of that rest house?—Very seldom.

A-287. Can you give me any reason why they do not?—I believe they prefer to live in other places.

A-288. Would it not be better to provide a rest house for Indians?—That is a very excellent idea.

A-289. Is there any provision in the Port Trust Act for the safety of the crews employed for loading and unloading?—No, there is nothing specifically laid down.

A-290. Would it not be desirable to amend the Act?—That is a matter which was recently put to Government; the Port Trust suggested that Government should appoint a Government inspector for that purpose; the reply from Government is that they do not propose to move in the matter at present.

A-291. I was not merely thinking of an inspector; would it not be better to incorporate certain provisions of the British Act with regard to safety devices in connection with the loaders?—We have protection for the workers on the wharf, but on the ship, as I say, that is outside our jurisdiction; there would have to be an Act passed specifically for that purpose.

A-292. You are not averse to that?—I am averse to the Port Trust having that responsibility; I am not averse to the Act but to the Port Trust being saddled with the responsibility.

A-293. Could you give me any idea of the number of children of workers of the Port Trust who go to school in Keamari?—I could not.

A-294. Is there a provident fund for your workers?—For certain classes, yes, generally for permanent men drawing over Rs. 40 a month.

A-295. Is it not necessary to have some provident fund arrangement for those who are drawing less?—We have been extending it in the last few months; we recently brought in tally clerks, who had not previously had it; we brought in cranemen and soon. We have been gradually extending it, but so far it has not reached the lower ranks yet.

A-296. It is desirable that it should?—Yes.

A-297. Have you anything to say as to amendment of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act regarding the method of employment?—I have no remarks to offer.

A-298. You have mentioned that at one place there are 32 privies at Manora. How many workers, men and women with their families have you got?—We have about 300 men employed in the workshop. I cannot say offhand the total number of men and women.

A-299. The men are living there with their families?—Not necessarily. But in many cases they are.

A-300. The arrangements are decidedly unsatisfactory?—I do not think so. We have a medical officer who reports to me whether everything is satisfactory. If he put up a recommendation for additional privies they would undoubtedly be put in.

A-301. But if there are 300 workers, many of them living with their families, and if you take family as being a unit of five, there will be nearly 1,600 people?—The conditions after all are different there. I have had no complaints about it.

A-302. Is it a fact that the Port Trust Labour Union has demanded better facilities?—I have not heard of it.

A-303. If it is brought to your notice I dare say it would be remedied ?—Anything like that would be remedied at once if it were found necessary.

A-304. You are in favour of departmental employment I suppose ?—To a certain extent.

A-305. And you would not be averse, I suppose, to having a labour bureau or labour exchange set up for the purpose of recruiting your workers ?—I have no objection at all if it would work well.

A-306. Would you have any objection to a system of sickness insurance, being adopted for the permanent workers ?—Taking the Port Trust, I do not think it is necessary. We have very liberal leave rules.

A-307. Speaking generally, you are not averse to the principle of sickness insurance ?—No, so far as the casual workers are concerned, but not for the Port Trust employees.

A-308. Because they have been provided already ?—They are very well treated; they have medical attention free.

A-309. But where such facilities are not provided you would not be averse to sickness insurance ?—No.

A-310. Are you in favour of extending the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act in order to cover all classes of workers ?—We have extended it as far as we are concerned. I have no objection to its general extension.

A-311. *Mr. Cliff*: Would you oblige the Commission by giving us some photographs of the lines that we saw yesterday ? You have got four categories of houses in which employees live ?—You would like photographs of the Manora houses and the native village houses ? I will give instructions for photographs to be taken at once. It will take a few days. I can send them on to you.

A-312. Will you be good enough to furnish the Commission with a copy of the Constitution of the Port Trust and copies of the Annual Report for the last four years ? I want you to be clear that you should include the one for 1924-25 ?—Yes.

A-313. Would you tell us the number of employees that are employed directly by the Port Trust ?—There is one question I should like to ask; and that is about the definition of the word 'labour'. What is labour ? Is a tally clerk who works for 12 hours a day like the artisan to be included or not ?

The Chairman: I think clerical labour is usually kept in the books separately from other kinds of labour; it is not manual labour ?—I want to be sure of the definition because it might affect my answers.

A-313a. *Mr. Cliff*: You have got, I understand, establishments A and B and certain other labour ?—Yes.

A-313b. I want to know the number of work-people employed direct by the Port Trust ?—May I put in the clerical staff or omit it ?

A-313c. Include it if you please ?—1,163 permanent.

A-314. How is that divided ?—403 clerical; peons, *chowkidars* and sweepers 306, engineers and drivers 381; coolies 10; cranemen, *munshis*, tally clerks, etc., 63.

A-315. That is the number of employees of establishment "A" ?—No. They are what we call permanent employees. The permanent employees are split into "A" and "B" which have different leave rules. That is what constitutes the difference between "A" and "B". Our permanent men are down at 1,163 while our temporary men are 3,293.

A-316. To save a number of questions, would you kindly send us a written memorandum showing the difference in the matter of privileges between "A" and "B" establishments ?—Yes. We have it all tabulated in a document a copy of which I can send on to you.

A-317. Would you tell us approximately the number of men who are employed by the Port Trust on dock labour, such as loading, unloading and coaling ?—It is about 25 a ship. Of course it depends on how many ships are in.

A-318. Are they employed direct ?—No, through the stevedores.

A-319. Have you any approximate idea of the number of men who were engaged on this work in the year 1924-25 as compared with the current year ?—I can work it out for you if you want to have that information.

A-320. Yes, if I am not troubling you too much ?—We have the data, but it is not collected.

A-321. Do you exercise any control over the labour employed by contractors ?—None, whatever except in very small details. For instance, on the docks we insist that the appliances should be up to our prescribed standard. We examine them for the safety of the workmen.

A-322. Have you got a record of the number of women and children that are employed by contractors ?—None whatever.

A-323. Is it possible to ascertain that ?—I should have to write to those people and ask them how many women and children they employ. That is the only thing I can do.

A-324. You would simply have to take what they say ; there is no record ?—No record.

A-325. Is there any record of rates of wages paid to the dock labour ?—No, only in their books. I pay the stevedore on a fixed basis per ton and I have nothing to do with the wages paid to each man.

A-326. Have the Port Trust considered the question of having a register of dock labour ?—Never.

A-327. You were asked a number of questions as to the finance of your housing scheme. Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola made a calculation as to the necessary relation between cost and rent. I had a little difficulty as to the arithmetic. Would you send a statement on the finance of this housing scheme ?—That is, you would like to know how the rent is arrived at.

A-328. Yes, the capital cost, how the rent is calculated and what interest the Port Trust obtain. I believe you said that excluded the cost of the land ?—Yes. The difficulty we have about this matter is that when I said the rents did not pay, that was based on the usual method of calculating rent. Very frequently in years gone by in fixing the rents we were guided by the rents which prevailed in previous years. The rent was merely fixed at say Rs. 4 or 5—purely an arbitrary figure and subsequently that has been increased by annas 8 or Re. 1. Very likely it will be necessary to work out a comparison.

A-329. You will do your best for us ?—Yes.

A-330. Could we also have copies of the correspondence which took place between your authority and the Government with regard to the provision of an inspector ?—Yes.

A-331. Mr. Chaman Lall asked you some questions about the movement for a reduction of hours that has been discussed by the Port Trust. I have with me a copy of the memorandum supplied by the Karachi Port Trust Labour Union. I do not know whether you have seen a copy of it ?—No.

A-332. Incidentally I may tell you that they pay you a great compliment, but what I am concerned with is a question of fact with regard to the proposal to reduce the hours of working. In this document they say "Unfortunately the representatives of big business the European Shipping Companies led by Mr. E. A. Pearson, Manager of Messrs. Forbes, Forbes, Campbell and Co., Ltd., Agents, Ellerman Lines, Limited, set their faces against the proposal and wrecked even the small measure of reform". That implies that the Port Trust had decided upon some reform. What I am concerned about in connection with this is that we should be furnished with the records of the Port Trust, if there are any, with regard to the proposal to reduce the hours of work at Karachi. Are there records ?—Yes. I might explain that a note was put up to the Board with regard to working hours. This was gone through by the Board but its consideration was deferred pending a reference to the various Chambers and employers of labour. When the replies came back the question was again considered by the Board and it was decided not to go on with it. This is the gist of the matter. The recommendation is not that of the Chairman of the Board. Probably it represents the views of the Traffic Manager and others on the matter.

A-333. I am concerned to see what was the recommendation and upon what that recommendation was based ?—Of course, the views of the Traffic Manager or of the Chief Engineer are not necessarily the views of the Board, and if you take the view of the Traffic Manager it might be against the ruling of the Board. I do not want to put in correspondence which might give a wrong impression as regards the Board's views.

A-334. This Commission has got to get at the facts. I hope you will not think we are troubling you too much in asking for this information ?—No, certainly not.

A-335. Mr. Ahmed : You are in favour of constructing a rest house for Indian seamen ?—I think it is a very excellent idea.

A-336. Because you have other rest houses which do not help them?—There is a seamen's rest house.

A-337. That is not meant for Indian seamen?—It is provided for all classes and creeds according to its constitution.

A-338. You are in favour of constructing a separate one for the Indians?—It is a very good idea.

A-339. The number of Indian seamen is much larger than the number of those who use the other rest house?—I should think so.

A-340. Yesterday we were inspecting the lost specimens of your huts where the workers live. The first huts we saw were constructed of straw and your Mr. Flynn was trying, I think, to disown these huts. Our Chairman, and many of our members and others, including the representatives of unions, were there. You charge for each hut Rs. 1-8-0 per mensem?—I think that is correct.

A-341. It was Rs. 1-12-0 before, and you promised to reduce it to Re. 1. Is that correct? Those are the facts that we gathered there, seeing the huts and making enquiries from the people?—I am not quite certain.

A-342. And then instead of reducing it to Re. 1, you have increased it to Rs. 5? Is that correct?—No, totally incorrect. I understand you are talking about mat huts.

A-342a. I told you I was referring to straw huts?

A-343. *The Chairman*: What is the present rent of the mat huts which you described to us as having been put up at the time of the plague?—Rs. 1-8-0.

A-344. Has that been changed?—Not so far as I am aware.

A-345. *Mr. Ahmed*: From which class of huts do you realize rent at the rate of Rs. 5 per mensem?—*Pucca* stone built houses.

A-346. You stated some time ago that you would reduce the rent from Rs. 1-12-0 or Rs. 1-8-0 to Re. 1. Instead of that you are charging Rs. 5. Some of the huts were burnt some time ago?—Yes.

A-347. And the fact was brought to your notice?—It was.

A-348. These huts were condemned by the municipal authority; that also was brought to your notice by the municipal authority?—I am afraid the facts to which you refer have not been brought to my notice. I have never heard about it.

A-349. When these huts were burnt, some people died as a result of the fire. I understand a man died?—I do not really know; not as a result of the fire, I understand.

A-350. You charge at the rate of Rs. 5 for some rooms or huts or buildings as a fixed charge?—Yes.

A-351. They are of uniform measurement?—Yes.

A-352. And the measurement of certain shops is the same?—Yes, very likely.

A-353. You charge for the shops at the rate of Rs. 22 per month?—That is correct.

A-354. And for the dwellings for workers Rs. 5 per month?—Yes.

A-355. What difference is there?—We found that the shops were being sublet for Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 per month, and we therefore thought an increase of the rent was indicated. They were changing hands at about ten times the rent we were charging. They were being sublet at exorbitant rates to outsiders.

A-356. Do you follow the same principle if the workers want an increase in their rates of pay?—No, that is entirely different.

A-357. What is the reason for charging a higher rent for the shops?—I believe it is usual to charge more for the shops than for a dwelling house.

A-358. I take it your principle is that of a profiteering concern. Is that the principle?—We thought it desirable to put up the rent of the shops; we thought they were being charged too small a rent.

A-359. Yesterday some of us also inspected the municipal system of supplying accommodation to the labourers at Lyari at Rs. 1 per annum. You probably know about it?—No, I do not know it.

A-360. You have stated under "Housing", that house rent is paid in the case of the shunting staff at the rate of Rs. 4 per mensem in lieu of quarters. Why do you charge a rent of Rs. 5?—This is a case where the shunting staff peons and *chowkidars* are supposed to get quarters if available. If quarters are not available, we give them a monthly

allowance of Rs. 4, in lieu of quarters. That is the general practice at Karachi. In lieu of quarters we give Rs. 4 per mensem to those who are entitled to quarters, as well as salary. If we cannot provide quarters we give them Rs. 4 to assist them to get quarters.

A-361. As you let the other houses at Rs. 4 have you any objection to letting these houses also at Rs. 4?—This is a different class of building. If I were building for these peons, I certainly should not give them two rooms and a verandah for Rs. 4 per month.

A-361a. The cost of building these huts on the Manora side is less than at Keamari? You do not know the amount spent?—No, I could not say without referring to my books.

A-362. Yesterday morning we were very much interested in looking at your crane, which was being used to load a steamer. You say in your memorandum that it is considered that if the slinging and unslinging were done departmentally the men employed would, as a whole, be better treated, as regards wages and housing conditions, than is the case at present; that is to say by employing workmen instead of having cranes which have caused disasters?—That means engaging the men departmentally instead of through contractors. The cranes would always be there.

A-363. You say it would probably be a very good idea to keep the men working instead of getting the contractor to do the slinging and unslinging work?—Yes.

A-364. Then why do you not maintain a fixed minimum number of men as permanent hands. Are you in favour of doing that?—No, I do not think I am.

A-365. If you kept a fixed minimum number of men as permanent hands, whenever necessary you could engage extra hands?—If it were done departmentally we would have to do that.

A-366. You are not in favour of that?—No, not necessarily. I would prefer the present system myself.

A-367. You say that it brings disaster, and our Chairman in the beginning asked about workmen's compensation. I am coming to that point. You are in favour of bringing men as permanent hands?—No, not necessarily.

A-368. Because slinging and unslinging work by crane means disaster?—I think there is some mistake. The slinging work is done by contractors now employed by the Port Trust. In my memorandum when I speak of the possibility of it being done departmentally, I mean it could be done departmentally as it is done in Bombay. Here the system is not to do that but to employ contractors to do the work. The machinery would be there whether it is departmental labour or contractor's labour. The cranes would still be there.

A-369. But there will be greater disaster and therefore you will have to pay more for workmen's compensation?—We find there is no disaster and that everything works smoothly.

The Chairman: It is merely a question between direct labour and contractor's labour.

A-370. *Mr. Ahmed:* Regarding medical facilities you say that you pay a certain amount towards the maintenance of a hospital somewhere?—Yes, we subscribe handsomely.

A-371. And you have two medical assistants, one at Keamari and one at Manora?—Yes.

A-372. But you do not undertake the direct responsibility yourself of giving medical facilities instead of sending them to the hospitals?—No.

A-373. You have not got your own staff?—We have a medical officer who attends three times a week for the staff who are ill, and in Manora a medical officer attends anyone who is sick. But generally a man who is very ill goes to the hospital or to his own home.

A-374. The hospital is open to the public, is open to everybody; there is no distinction between a patient who comes from the Port Trust and one who comes from outside?—That is true.

A-375. Can you suggest any other method?—No, we subscribe very handsomely to the hospitals here and we have dispensaries everywhere.

A-376. Any man in the street can get those facilities; but have you in the Port Trust any other means of giving the men the required medical facilities apart from sending them to the public hospitals?—No, I should say we are not prepared to give further facilities.

A-377. *The Chairman* : They are also citizens like all the rest ?—And we are tax-payers like everybody else.

A-378. *Mr. Ahmed* : The workers do not get any special medical facilities ?—We would rather subscribe more to the hospitals which render the necessary medical aid to our men.

A-379. But that is nothing more than the assistance given to the public. I am asking you whether the Port Trust are agreeable to take steps to give more facilities in the matter of medical relief of the workmen there ?—My opinion is that the trustees will not agree. The matter has to be decided by the Board.

A-380. But since you represent them can you anticipate their decision or will they decide against you ?—I should represent it unfavourably to the trustees, but the trustees might not hold the same opinion.

A-380a. *Mr. Ahmed* : From your written memorandum it is seen that the men work at one stretch from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for eleven hours, with one hour recess in the middle. Would you agree to minimize the number of hours of work and at the same time see that it is not continuous ?.

The Chairman : We have already had the views of the witness on the question of the reduction of hours.

A-380b. *Mr. Ahmed* : Is that not in contravention of the Washington Convention ?—I am not aware of it.

A-381. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In answer to Mr. Ahmed with reference to your written evidence regarding the work being done departmentally, you stated that you thought it would be better to do it in the same way as they do it in Bombay, i.e., departmentally ?—No. I did not say that. I am not prepared personally to advocate any change.

A-382. You say that in Bombay they employ dock labour departmentally. Is that actually the case ?—I believe so.

A-383. Do they not in Bombay recruit through "Toliwallahs" and pay according to the piece-work system at so much per ton or so much per unit ?—I am speaking subject to correction, but I have recently read a report of what they call the "hamallaga" department which is a separate department which supplies this labour.

A-384. We have evidence to show that in Bombay they employ Toliwallahs but not contractors. You here employ stevedore contractors who employ gangmen to bring their gangs to work as dock labourers. In Bombay they do not have these stevedore contractors for dock work over and above ordinary ship stevedore work. The gangmen are paid by piece-work. The only difference between you and Bombay is that in Bombay dock work they do not employ a stevedore, whereas you employ a stevedore here.—Your information will be more correct than mine.

A-385. In reply to Mr. Chaman Lall regarding the constitution of the Board you said that the Board consisted of 12 members of whom four members were from the European Chamber of Commerce ?—There are 14 members including the chairman who is a trustee and four members from the Chamber of Commerce, Karachi.

A-386. So that, if the Board made a recommendation, there were on the Board only four members from the European Chamber of Commerce ?—Yes.

A-387. You evidently have not heard about the condemnation of some of your huts ?—This is the first I have heard of it.

A-388. Have you ever been to Lyari, where the Municipality is selling land for working class houses ?—I have been there once or twice.

A-389. If you were a worker would you prefer to live in one of your houses, or at Lyari ?—I should prefer to stay in my own hut.

A-390. If you could get the house at Lyari cheap, even then would you live in your own house ?—Yes, in my own house.

A-391. Will you take the photographs of the huts at Lyari as well as the huts you have provided for your workers ?—(Mr. Mehta) In the afternoon I will give you an album of pictures.

A-392. *Col. Russell* : In your memorandum with regard to the extent of the medical facilities provided you say that you employ two medical officers. Have you got a local dispensary ?—(Mr. Downie) We have a small dispensary in the Port Trust Office and another at Manora.

A-393. Do you provide any first-aid treatment in the case of accidents and minor injuries ?—As a rule, no, except, for instance, at the works where we have first-aid

appliances. On the docks first-aid is usually supplied by the ship. We have a motor ambulance ready to take a patient to the hospital, which is close by.

A-394. I notice that you subscribe to the maintenance of the ambulance and you also subscribe to the Red Cross Association which maintains a qualified nurse at Keamari?—Yes.

A-395. With regard to a question that was put to you about recreation, I rather gather that you do not agree to do what might be called "welfare work"?—No, that was not my idea. My idea was not to interfere with the recreations of the people and to allow them to find their own recreations. Welfare work is rather different.

A-396. You might easily add to the activities which you support? For instance, you might add welfare clinics for babies, crèches and ante-natal clinics. Would you be averse to extending your activities in those directions?—Yes; I think it is the duty of the municipality within whose limits the Port Trust is. We are prepared to subscribe to any such institutions: but it is the duty of the municipality, not of the Port Trust, to provide these things.

A-397. Is it not the duty of employers to provide welfare facilities for their workers?—We prefer to do it in the shape of contributions.

A-398. *Mr. Ahmed* asked you about the medical facilities which you have provided for the labourers. I take it that you are of the same opinion as myself that medical aid is much better given in a large well-equipped hospital than in a series of small hospitals maintained independently.—Certainly.

A-399. *Mr. Joshi*: What is the total number of workers employed in the docks, not merely by the Port Trust, but generally?

The Chairman: We are going to be supplied with some further figures, and this figure can be supplied at the same time.

A-400. *Mr. Joshi*: In reply to Mr. Clow you said that there was no unemployment, but there was under-employment?—It was Mr. Clow himself who said that.

Mr. Clow: I did not say that either. I said it seemed to be more under-employment.

A-401. *Mr. Joshi*: There is more under-employment than unemployment?—Yes, that is probably a better way of putting it.

A-402. Have you made any enquiry about other employees other than the employees of the Port Trust?—No.

A-403. Now as regards this question of under-employment, is there any method by which you can allot work to the different employees?—You see we have had to shut down our works on account of our financial situation and unless a revival of trade sets in I do not see any way of helping them.

A-404. Suppose at present you have got 4,000 workers and there is under-employment, which means that you allot work for two or three days a week to all of them, how do you allot work which is not sufficient for all the people for all the days of the week?—The under-employment is not among the Port Trust labourers. The men I have mentioned are working every day all the year round. The under-employment exists among the stevedores' men who are not getting any employment on account of the paucity of shipping.

A-405. Have you any method by which the work could be distributed among the people?—I have not got any method.

A-406. You certainly think it would be desirable to adopt some method by which the work could be distributed in such a way as to abolish under-employment?—It would be an excellent thing if it could be done.

A-407. Do you also think it would be desirable to adopt some method by which the number of workers in the docks would be restricted to those who permanently work?—I should like very much to get the population down, but I do not see how it is possible.

A-408. In western countries they have the same difficulties, and they have some method of registering the workers. Those who are registered are given work, whereas those who are not registered are not generally given work. You would not be against such a system?—No, but it is rather difficult.

A-409. Can you tell us why your workers prefer to go and live in the town to living in your houses?—It is for communal reasons. I have tried to get the men to live at Keamari.

A-410. Perhaps it may be costly; your rent may be too high for them?—It may be in some cases. But in many cases our rent is cheaper. Anyhow they prefer to live in Karachi and do not want to go to Keamari.

A-411. Do you ever find that the proportion of rent to the total earnings of your employees, or any class of your employees, is too high? You are charging Rs. 5 as rent in some cases?—I quite see your point. The difficulty is frequently got over by three or four men sharing a house. We know that that happens. For instance, if we were to pay a man Rs. 5 as rent allowance, he would not live in his house alone; he would immediately take in one or two friends. The result would be the same.

A-412. As regards medical arrangements, the representative of the Seamen's Union stated that a certain class of people get the benefit of treatment by a well qualified medical man, whereas the lower paid workers do not get the benefit of treatment by so well qualified a man. Is that true?—It is not quite correct. Some of the workers are not entitled to medical facilities which others are entitled to get. We have a local dispensary at Keamari managed by the municipality and the ordinary working man, if he is entitled to medical attendance, can go there and get attention free. There are only two officers, one deals with Manora and the other who deals with Karachi.

A-413. If you find that certain persons get the benefit of treatment at the hands of a better qualified man, while certain others who are low-paid get treatment at the hands of a less qualified man, will you change that?—I think I should.

A-414. In reply to Mr. Chaman Lall you said that you would like to have a sickness insurance scheme for the permanent staff only and not for the casual workers. What do you mean by casual workers?—Just the man who comes to-day and goes away to-morrow.

A-415. You have a class of daily rated men?—There is a distinction. We have daily wages men who may come and work for two days, go away, and then come back a week after; but we also have daily wages men in our workshops who are practically permanent while still on daily wages.

A-416. If Government prepares a scheme for sickness insurance, will you pay your quota also?—I do not like it in the case of the casual worker, one who works for a day or two and goes away. We have a very large number of them.

A-417. Have you found out how many of your workers are working in the docks for months together though they are regarded as daily rated? Would you call them casual workers who should not be given the benefits of sickness insurance?—Yes. They are not on my list really.

A-418. I am talking of the people on your list, those people who work in the docks not merely for a day but for weeks together. Do you not think it would be justifiable for an employer to be asked to pay a certain proportion as his share of the sickness insurance premium?—I am not in favour of it as I see it at present.

A-419. Why do you make a difference between a man who is paid daily and a man who is paid monthly?—Because the man I pay monthly is under my observation and I know his habits and character. A casual worker who comes to me for a day or two may get sickness not through any fault of his work, but through his own fault.

A-420. I am not talking of the casual man; I am talking of the man who is paid daily but works for months together?—That is a very different thing. We have in the engineering shops daily wages men who have been with us for 25 years. Those men would get the same benefits as other employees get.

A-421. *Dewan Chaman Lall*: Then you agree with Mr. Joshi?—Except in the case of the casual labourer.

A-422. *Mr. Joshi*: Have the Port Trust any ships registered under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—We have one or two small tugs.

A-423. So that you are interested in questions relating to seamen?—Yes.

A-424. Have you any objection to the representative of labour on your Port Trust being elected by the Port Trust Workers Union?—I should not like to say. It depends who it is; I might object to the man. I do not consider it is necessary at all.

A-425. Suppose you want to send your representative somewhere, certainly that representative will be selected by you. In the same way if you want a workers' representative, that representative must be approved of and accepted by the workers?—But I do not want a workers' representative on the Board.

A-426. You have one?—He is nominated by Government.

A-427. You cannot explain why you are opposed to the workers' representative being elected?—I do not think it is necessary that he should be on the Board. If he is there I cannot object.

A-428. If he is there, you would prefer an elected man?—Not necessarily.

A-429. Diwan Chaman Lall referred to safety regulations ; you said you are not against that?—No, certainly not.

A-430. You would not be opposed to legislation laying down certain measures for the safety of workers who work on gangways and so on, loading or unloading?—Quite so.

A-431. Was your Port Trust consulted by the Government of India on this question?—We were.

A-432. What was your reply?—We suggested that a Government inspector or inspectors should be appointed to carry out the duties which are carried out by the Board of Trade at Home in such matters.

A-433. The question is not who should appoint an inspector ; the first question is whether there should be some law laying down measures for the safety of men working?—Yes.

A-434. The second question would be as to who should inspect to see whether those regulations are carried out or not. Then certainly the Government will appoint an inspector. So my question to you was this : whatever may have happened in the past, supposing your Port Trust is consulted now by Government as to whether such regulations are desirable or not, your Board will most probably reply that as far as you can judge regulations are necessary?—Certainly.

A-435. *The Chairman* : You have promised to send a statement on the question of reduction of working hours?—I understand that was withdrawn.

Mr. Cliff : What I withdrew was the question of your advice and recommendation to the Board ; but I would like the resolution?—I beg your pardon.

A-436. *The Chairman* : We did not think it right to press for internal advice given ; but I want to ask if you can give us with that information two documents which I think may be taken as official documents, namely, the communications on that matter that you received from the two Chambers of Commerce, the European Chamber and the Indian Chamber?—I am not certain about it, but I rather think that the communication of the Chamber of Commerce was marked "Confidential". The Chamber of Commerce could give it.

A-437. If it is confidential, of course we cannot ask for it?—I think most of their communications are marked "Confidential"; I am not certain.

A-438. If you find that they can be put at our service, we should like to see them?—I shall talk to the President of the Chamber of Commerce about the matter.

A-439. *Mr. Joshi* : In the memorandum of the labour union it is said that you sometimes pay wages as late as the 15th day of the following month ; is that a correct statement?—I think that is incorrect. You understand that sometimes three or four holidays will intervene and then there may be late payment ; but the whole thing has been tightened up and my information is that our payments are made with the utmost rapidity, from one to 5 days after the end of the month in practically every case. There may be an isolated case where a man for some reason has not got his pay, but not as a rule, and certainly not 15 days.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. JAMSHED N. R. MEHTA, President, Karachi Municipality.

A-440. *The Chairman* : Mr. Mehta, you are the President of the Municipal Council of Karachi?—I am.

The Chairman : May I take this opportunity, in the first place, of thanking you on behalf of myself and my colleagues for your kind courtesy to us during our stay here. May I ask you also to convey to your officials our sense of gratitude to them for the services they have rendered to us. I myself, during my short time here, have formed a very high opinion of the qualities of the staff of your municipality and I am sure they are a great credit to you, you being the President of the Municipality. You have been good enough to submit a detailed memorandum to us, and we have had the advantage of your presence with us during the greater part of our work of inspection yesterday ; so that having had the opportunity of putting many questions to you verbally and receiving such ready answers to them, it will not be necessary for me to put more than two or three questions to-day. May I suggest to my Colleagues, too, that they might not find it necessary to repeat questions which were put yesterday.

The Witness : May I put in certain statements in writing in order to save time ?—There are certain figures which the Commission may find useful.

The Chairman : Some additional figures ?—Yes. I have got an album of photographs of the housing conditions of Karachi. I would draw your special attention to a photograph which will give you an idea of how the people live in wooden cases. Then, sir, I have got a statement of the housing conditions prepared from our records and census figures, showing the different positions of labourers and how they live. Then, sir, I have got a statement of infantile mortality amongst labourers, containing information about latrines and bathing places. Then, I have got a statement showing how many labourers and officers and others work in each department of the municipality. That may be useful to you.

A-441. In your memorandum you say that "Unemployment is considerable in the city of Karachi," and you tell us that it is caused by a slump in trade and by there being no industry in the city. Labour is employed generally by the Port Trust, Municipality and the Railway. The Railway has lately shifted their workshop from Karachi to Sukkur. Thus the unemployment is increased considerably." You heard this morning some questions raised in the evidence of Mr. Harrison. He said he could employ much more labour than he has at his service. Will you give us your views as to the possibility of the transfer of some of the unemployed labour in Karachi to fill the gap which exists at present in Sukkur ?—The labour in Karachi have all got their families with them, and they are practically permanent residents of Karachi, and they know that at Sukkur they would be required only for a temporary period, and naturally they would not like to shift their families. Even then I feel that unemployment is so severe that some of them would go to Sukkur, leaving their families here, particularly those who are not holding any permanent jobs here, in order to earn something there.

A-442. Some would go particularly those who are not held by family ties ?—Yes, but there is so much unemployment that even people with families would go.

A-442a. Having heard that evidence, is it within your power as President of the Municipality to see what steps can be taken to relieve this unemployment ? It seems a pity that there should be unemployment in Karachi, while there is work waiting for the labourers at Sukkur ?—Yes, certainly.

A-443. I understood from Mr. Harrison that the demand will continue until 1934 ?—This is the first time I knew of that.

A-444. In your memorandum, you refer to the housing conditions, that is to say your municipal housing which we saw. You say "There is ample supply of water being made to them, but I do feel that there is more need of provision for bathing facilities which is not adequate at present" ?—Yes.

A-445. It is within your power to remedy that ?—Yes, it is within our power. I am merely making a statement of fact.

A-446. No doubt you will have that express need represented to your Board ?—Yes.

A-447. In your memorandum you make a reference to the usefulness of Provident Funds, and I gather that you have some special experience of your own in that respect. Could you tell us what that is ?—The Provident Fund which all the local bodies, like the Port Trust and the Municipality have opened, generally extend to those who are labourers. The system is that, although they have worked for 25 years—I know even in the municipality some of them have worked for 25 years—they are still on daily wages, and they are called daily wage people. Everywhere my experience is that as soon as you start to do something the question of finance is brought in. It is said that they have been there for years and that they are now too old to be brought under the Provident Fund, and that it would mean a lot of service books, trouble and accounting. My personal opinion is that it only requires a change of heart to overcome all these difficulties.

A-448. By the term "Provident Fund", I take it you mean a fund into which the workers pay their savings, and through which they can obtain credit on certain conditions ?—No. By Provident Fund we mean that the workers pay a specific amount, say 12½ per cent. of their salary, towards the Provident Fund. Then the Municipality or other employer add another 12½ per cent. Then we allow compound interest on the amount and the amount goes on accumulating, and at the time of retirement they get it in a lump sum. If they are in need, for example, during sickness, we allow them to draw out of the fund, provided they pay back within 24 months by deductions from their salary. That is the system of provident fund as it is generally known everywhere in India. The employer makes an equal contribution from his side.

A-449. That is the system working in the Municipality ?—Yes, in the Municipality Port Trust and many places with which I have been associated.

A-450. From what you stated this morning, I gather that your view is to have a system of weekly payment of wages, combined with a co-operative credit society?—Yes.

A-451. That would be a benefit even to the lowest class of worker?—Yes.

A-452. Have you any actual experience of that matter?—I have experience of the co-operative credit movement, but I have no experience of the weekly payment system, because none has been made up to now. I have gathered the opinion, however, and I do feel myself, that by weekly payments there would not be so much indebtedness. Under the prevailing system the men have to borrow money for their grain. Naturally they have to pay interest. A weekly payment system would go a great way towards helping to better their condition.

A-453. I gather also that you are an advocate of shorter hours of labour, discussed this morning?—I am not only an advocate, but a strong advocate of it, and I have got reasons for it.

A-454. In your memorandum you make a suggestion, which I do not profess to understand, with regard to 'direct legislation about the priest classes and *sanyasis* who take every opportunity to rob the innocent persons of their moneys'. Do you wish to press that suggestion?—I am quite serious about it. My opinion is this: we take precautions against epidemics, plague, cholera; and these priests and *sanyasis* are no less than an epidemic in India. Some legislation ought to be undertaken to save the labourers from this trouble. These *sanyasis* and *sadhus* are a real epidemic in India.

A-455. That would be a very novel type of legislation?—It has to be done, if you want to save the labourer. I would respectfully say that if I were a Member of the Royal Commission, I would put it as the first item of work. I am quite serious about it.

A-456. I should be interested to see the draft Bill on that subject?—All the efforts that you would make otherwise would be absolutely useless, at least a good deal of them, without this,—either education or legislation, or both.

A-457. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum you say that there is no need of a public recruitment agency in the city of Karachi. In view of what you have stated regarding unemployment, would you prefer to modify that statement in any way?—Why.

A-458. There is work for them at Sukkur?—I was speaking with reference to Karachi only.

A-459. Is it not possible that a recruitment agency might possibly be able to find work for them elsewhere?—Yes. I would modify my statement from that point of view.

A-460. *The Chairman*: In England there are some cases where railway fares can be paid on certain occasions to transfer labour to the places where work can be found for them?—I would modify my statement. I thought the question referred only to Karachi.

A-461. *Mr. Clow*: As regards the sweepers' houses which we saw yesterday, do they represent, in your opinion, the minimum that should be provided for a working family in order to enable them to live decently?—My personal opinion is that I would condemn these houses also. They consist of one room, in which there is a husband and wife, perhaps three children, a grown-up daughter and a grown-up son. How do you expect them all to live in one room?

A-462. These houses are rent-free?—True, but you asked whether I considered that as the minimum accommodation required. I do not consider that as the minimum.

A-463. Supposing you erected these quarters as a commercial proposition, what rent would you charge?—I will tell you what my opinion is. There are all sorts of mathematical calculations made by Municipality and other employers. My opinion is that we ought to calculate the rent on the efficiency we hope to get by housing them properly and on the sort of wages we give them. If we build proper houses for them we get the return out of them. This method of calculating by allowing for a sinking fund, depreciation, and interest at 6 per cent., etc., is unsatisfactory.

A-464. My point is this. Taking into view the poverty of the working class people, what would roughly be the annual rent if the housing of workers is undertaken on a commercial basis?—My calculation, if a really proper scheme is made, is that we could give them very good houses for Rs. 2-8-0 per month, provided those who are in charge of it agreed not to bring in any fantastical calculations.

A-465. Would that be a commercial proposition?—Yes. My calculation is that a loan of 30 lakhs would be repaid within fifteen years, and the rent could be kept at Rs. 2-8-0 per month. I am prepared to put that statement before the Royal Commission with plans and everything. I would do that with the greatest pleasure.

Mr. Clow : If you will do that, it will be of help to the Commission.

A-466. *Mr. Birla* : You refer to the question of unemployment, and as a remedy for that you suggest the fostering of industries. Then you complain that the Government of Bombay has done nothing in that direction. Have you anything particularly in mind ?—Yes, if you read the history of Sind in the past, you will find that there were many beautiful cottage industries in Sind. The printing of cloth was one of the best industries of Sind ; potteries was one of our best industries ; lacquer work was another. All these industries are now no longer in existence. I feel myself that the Government of Bombay could do much. They have got an Industries Department. They have got a Director of Industries with practically no staff—one Director of Industries for five different districts. The Department should be expanded, and given proper staff and a cultured engineer or other officers who may be required for the purpose. I am personally of opinion that the Government of Bombay has done nothing for Sind for the last 100 years. Cottage industries could be fostered, and there are many things which could be done. The Industrial Department will not be enough. Experimental factories should be started. Many things could be done.

A-467. You have promised to give us a scheme about housing. Have you a similar scheme for the establishment of industries in this province ?—I have a note on it, and I will give it to the Commission.

A-468. *Mr. Harrison* in his evidence this morning gave us some very interesting figures to the effect that there is a great disparity between the minimum and maximum number of men employed on his work. He said the number fluctuated between 30,000 and 19,000 ?—Probably it is due to the fact that during the rainy season people like to return to their homes.

A-468a. You may have some scheme of your own by which you may be able to provide some work during the idle months of the year. I would be very much interested if you would be good enough to send us a scheme for the fostering of cottage industries, or any other scheme which might be promoted in this part of the country.

A-469. With regard to co-operative banks, do you think that co-operative banks alone, without the help of the money-lenders, will be able to meet the requirements of all your labourers ?—As a matter of fact in our co-operative banks we have got sometimes more surplus capital than invested capital.

A-470. What is the rate of interest which the money-lenders charge ?—I can give you concrete instances. We have got 720 sweepers. We took a list of the whole staff three years back. Their capital debt was Rs. 31,000 while the yearly interest paid was Rs. 53,000. These are facts ; it is no exaggeration. We have taken statistics house by house, the name of the money-lender, the amount owed, the rate of interest and so on. We have all the details.

A-471. Can we have that statement ?—If it is of any use I shall be glad to give it to you. The capital was Rs. 31,000 whereas the interest was Rs. 53,000. The interest is regularly paid and honestly paid in every case. It is generally two annas in the rupee per month.

A-472. You have been very much interested in the working classes. Can you tell us what the total debt of the working classes in Karachi is ?—I can tell you that there is no working man in Karachi who is not in debt.

A-473. Do you think that it is a huge figure ?—It is a huge figure amounting to lakhs of rupees in Karachi alone. Every working man is in debt to the extent of Rs. 50 to Rs. 200.

A-474. Do you mean to say that your co-operative societies will be able to find that money ?—I hope so.

A-475. If the business is so remunerative why do not the big financiers take it up ? Is it on account of the risk involved therein ?—There are sufficiently rich people who do take it up. It is a very remunerative business. These people pay their debts very honourably and honestly. If the father dies, the son pays and if the son dies the third generation pays it up. I have found the instinct of repaying debt to be very strong in the working men here. In fact, if I may say so, they have got more sense of honour than many so-called respectable merchants in the city.

A-476. There is now such a severe depression in trade in Karachi that if this particular business is so remunerative why do not the capitalists invest their money in it ?—They cannot go to the poor sweepers and other labourers. There are certain people who are conscientious enough not to charge a high rate of interest. But there are others who look at it from a purely business point of view, and charge 75, 80, 100 and 150 per cent. interest.

A-477. Can you give us detailed figures ?—I can give you figures for the municipal staff alone.

A-478. For other labourers ?—No, that will be too much for me. But I know it as a fact that every working man in Karachi is in debt. I am not exaggerating it.

A-479. What is the extent of the liquor habit among the working classes in Karachi ?—I think it is not much amongst the working classes. This habit is found more among the clerical than among the labouring classes, except in certain communities. The *Mekranis* and the Mussalman communities and many of the Hindu communities do not drink. But certain Hindu communities do drink.

A-480. Have you got any plan for the reduction of the consumption of liquor ?—Yes. I have got a plan. My view is that we should go to the root of the question. I was one of the members of the Excise Committee appointed by the Bombay Government, and we have given a complete report of the situation and how it could be handled. The Government of Bombay should have the courage to take those steps.

A-481. You will agree that the question does not entirely rest with the local government ?—Yes, it rests with the Central Government also. Our recommendations to the Central Government are very well summarized in four or five pages and the Labour Commission can get a copy of it. We have laid down a complete programme therein.

A-482. *Mr. Joshi* : Does the Karachi Municipality control any factory ?—No. In fact we have got no powers to control any factory except from the health point of view.

A-483. You have no workshop of any kind ?—We have got a small workshop.

A-484. How many men are there ?—Some twenty or twenty-five.

A-485. If there are 20 it must come under the Indian Factories Act ?—I meant to say that under the Municipal Act we have no powers to control factories.

A-486. As employers of labour you are quite willing that the hours of work in your factories should be reduced ?—Yes.

A-487. Your Municipality would not object to it ?—Certainly not. I do not think that our labourers are worked at night or for 11 hours and over.

A-488. You certainly do not want long hours of work in your factories, and your Municipality will certainly like them to be reduced by legislation ?—I am giving my personal opinion and I think the Municipality will carry it out. I am told by our Health Officer that we have only 54 hours of work per week for our labourers.

A-489. As employers of labour your Municipality will also approve of a reasonable scheme of sickness insurance ?—Certainly.

A-490. What about unemployment insurance ?—I am doubtful. But if there is any scheme by which we can do something for the welfare of the labourers we will not fail to adopt it.

A-491. Do your employees get the benefit of any provident fund scheme ?—We have an A list and a B list, but a large majority do not come under that provident fund scheme. As I have said, it requires a change of mentality and a change of heart.

A-492. You will try as President to change that mentality ?—You may take it from me.

A-493. In your Memorandum you have expressed the opinion that generally labour is permanent. So you do not agree with the view which some people hold that labour in India is generally migratory ?—As far as Karachi is concerned it is certainly not so.

A-494. You said in your Memorandum that the application of the Unemployment Convention would be ridiculous. You mean to say that the application of International conventions regarding unemployment to India would be ridiculous in the absence of education ?—Yes. Education is first necessary.

A-495. Perhaps you mean that people not being educated there will be some people to exploit them ?—Certainly.

A-496. Do you know that one of the Conventions regarding Unemployment is that Governments should supply statistics to the International Labour Office ? Are you against it ?—I am not against it wholesale.

A-497. You are not against the application of all the Conventions as a whole, because there are certain Conventions which ask Governments, that they should supply the necessary figures to the International Labour Office and do such other easy things ?—No.

A-498. Has your Municipality power to build houses for working classes generally, and not your employees alone?—Yes, we have got the power.

A-499. Have you exercised it at any time?—We have not exercised it. We have got some committees working on it now. We first want to house our employees who are about 2,000 and then we want to extend it. As a matter of fact there are two or three committees working at plans for the buildings and so on.

A-500. Do you not think yourself that the housing of the working classes by a public body like the municipality is much better and will be preferred by the workers themselves than housing by their own employers?—My opinion is that in the absence of the employers who are not generally willing to do it, the public body ought to do it for the sake of the health of the city. If the employers would do it, I would not object.

A-501. I suggest to you that the working classes would prefer housing by the municipality to housing by their own employers; because at certain periods they will be put to inconvenience if they are housed by their own employers? What have you to say on that?—I prefer them to be housed by the municipality if the municipality can do it.

A-502. Do you agree with me that the housing of the workers in Karachi is not desirable, because they cannot afford to live in better houses as their wages are not quite sufficient?—They have not got sufficient work to earn their wages, and their wages are not sufficient. It is both.

A-503. If a man earns Rs. 15 a month he cannot pay Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 for rent?—No, he cannot.

A-504. It is not that they have got the money and are not willing to go into better houses?—No, it is not.

A-505. You have got a Health Department. I should like to know your experience in certain matters. You have already stated that your municipal dispensaries are very well patronized by all the working classes. You have not found that they have any prejudice against them?—No.

A-506. Do you find it difficult to get doctors for your municipal work?—No.

A-507. Suppose the Government of India undertake a scheme for sickness insurance, do you think there will be a dearth of doctors to conduct that scheme?—The doctors will thank you for it!

A-508. Will there be sufficient doctors?—Yes.

A-509. You have dealt with the question of indebtedness among your working men. Do you not think it would be more helpful if we had a stricter legislation against usury especially for regulating the interest which these Pathans and others charge?—They get some protection in the Small Causes Court which enables them to pay in small instalments. But the difficulty is about the agency to help them. You may have legislation, but unless you have got an agency to help them it is no use. The terror of the Pathans is so great.

A-510. At the same time would you also agree that a stricter legislation is necessary which will prevent the charging of high rates of interest?—I do not think it is necessary. There are many other ways to get round it.

A-511. *Miss Power*: Dealing with the question of maternity benefit, I see you say that the Municipality affords facilities for women for 20 days' absence at least during maternity. That is, ten days before child-birth and ten days afterwards?—It may not be exactly that. It may be five days before and fifteen afterwards.

A-512. Does that cover the women sweepers as well?—Everyone.

A-513. Does the Municipality take steps to enquire whether the women sweepers have equal facilities in the hospitals with the women of higher caste?—As far as our maternity homes are concerned, they would have equal facilities.

A-514. Are there enough facilities in your hospitals to cover the great number of women employed?—We have three maternity homes, but more are required. We have only just begun.

A-515. Do you take any steps to ascertain whether the women employed are treated by trained midwives—those who are treated in their own homes?—Some prefer their own midwives. We have health associations which have midwives in all quarters, who regularly attend during the time of birth; but there are some women who still cling to their old methods and have their own particular midwives, who are not registered yet. The Government have lately asked us whether we would prefer to have registration of midwives, and we have agreed to that proposal; but as long as they are not registered we cannot take any action.

A-516. Could you give me any information on the subject of the women coolies employed on building. I presume they are all employed by sub-contractors?—They are all employed by contractors or sub-contractors.

A-517. Are some of them on Municipal work that is being contracted out?—Yes. In every building you will find them.

A-518. Are the women who are engaged in carrying stones carrying a weight equal to that carried by the men coolies?—No. They cannot carry the same weight.

A-519. *Mrs. Karaka* : I understand that a sweeper family makes about 50 to 60 rupees a month : the husband gets about 20 ; the wife gets 20, and if there are two children they get 20 rupees between them.—Children are not employed by us. They used to work, but we stopped it. They work in the private houses, but we do not allow them in Municipal employ.

A-520. Would it not be better to have separate maternity homes for them?—It might be. My personal opinion is that the only way to uplift them is to make them go to other maternity homes. Once you keep them separate, the separation will continually last.

A-521. Owing to caste distinctions they are not taking advantage of it as much as they ought to?—My personal opinion is that they should be made to go to other maternity homes if you want to lift them up. Otherwise they will always remain suppressed.

A-522. At present it means that the infantile mortality is more?—That is true.

A-523. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Can you give us a brief history of the trade union movement in Karachi, and a statement as to the existing trade unions, whether registered or unregistered?—We have three or four unions, and they are working very well, but generally they are managed by other than their own classes ; and my opinion is that we should so foster them that they should be managed by their own classes. The Municipality has passed a resolution that they will only recognize those unions which are officered by their own men and not by the members of the Municipality.

A-524. But under the Trade Union Act that is allowed?—We do not object to it, but we do think that their own men should be trained up to manage their own affairs.

A-525. Was there any scheme propounded for erecting houses for the working classes by the Municipality?—In the last five years there have been several schemes, but so far we have not been able to carry them out, for one reason or another.

A-526. Was there a scheme to levy a terminal tax?—Yes, but the Government turned it down. In Karachi we have double the area than Bombay. We are 72 miles in area and we have one-fifth of the population of Bombay. To manage a city double the size of Bombay with one-fifth the population is difficult, so we suggested a small transit tax. All our labouring classes depend upon the transit trade. Therefore we wanted to impose a small terminal tax in order to build houses, but the Government turned down that scheme because the Chambers of Commerce and the mercantile bodies strongly objected to it. It was about one pie per gallon of kerosene oil and one pice per cwt. of sugar.

A-527. Was there a suggestion to make up the deficit of the Port Trust by means of some sort of terminal tax?—Yes. There was not an actual deficit, but in anticipation of a deficit the Port Trust asked the Government that the wharfage on cotton should be raised 25 per cent., and it was immediately allowed.

A-528. There was no question of turning that down?—No.

A-529. Did the Municipality take over certain schools from the Sweepers' Union?—We did.

A-530. Has the Government contributed anything towards those schools?—No, on the contrary we did not get a grant from the Government towards them. They disallowed it because we took them over without first asking their consent. They were going to be closed and I saw that the children would be without schools. There were seven schools, and I asked the School Board to take them over immediately.

A-531. Purely on that ground?—Yes.

A-532. Is it a fact that the Municipality provides soap, towels, brushes and so on?—Yes, in all the poorer schools we allow them free of charge.

A-533. Did that represent a portion of the grant for which you applied to the Government?—The Government have a very novel system of giving grants. They do not even pay grants for peons or sweepers.

A-534. They would not sanction this particular grant at all?—No.

A-535. I understand that under the Municipal Act itself they cannot prevent you from giving books and slates free to the school children ?—They cannot, but they do not give their half share.

A-536. What is the system of factory inspection in Karachi ?—They have Government Factory Inspectors.

A-537. How many times in the course of the year does he visit Karachi ?—Possibly twice a year. I am not certain.

A-538. There is no organization on the spot ?—There used to be a Boiler Inspector, but now there is none.

A-539. Do you agree with the Shippers' and Buyers' memorandum that there is no considerable unemployment in Karachi ?—No. I am the Chairman of that body, but I do not agree with that.

A-540. With regard to your statement about the Workmen's Compensation Act, you say something about gaining experience ; but if experience showed that the provisions of that Act should be extended, you would not be averse to that ?—No.

A-541. Nor would you be averse to an amendment of that Act in order to widen its scope ?—Certainly not.

A-542. I take it that it is your definite opinion that housing has a great deal to do with the increased mortality during certain months of the year ?—I am convinced of it.

A-543. And that the mortality figures would improve if housing conditions were better ?—Yes.

A-544. How many people are living in Keamari and Lyari ?—In Keamari there are about 800 families and in Lyari 9,000 families.

A-545. Would I be correct in stating that something like 50,000 people live in those two quarters ?—Yes.

A-546. Would that be about one-fifth of the population ?—Yes.

A-547. Would I be correct in saying that the conditions of housing in those two places leave everything to be desired ?—There is no housing at all.

A-548. So that one in every five in Karachi live under those conditions.—In many houses there are 20 people living ; in others 14. The census records show that.

A-549. Have you any welfare workers employed by the Municipality ?—We are all supposed to be unpaid welfare workers.

A-550. Would it not be a better plan to have welfare workers ?—A very good plan.

A-551. You say that there is no facility for industrial or vocational training of any kind. Would you recommend that there should be an attempt made to provide that sort of training ?—It is very necessary. We must raise them up and make them efficient workers.

A-552. With regard to hours of work, you say you are in favour of a 9 hour working day. Does that leave very much leisure to the working classes ?—It takes them about 1½ hours to come and go.

A-553. That means 11½ hours really consumed in the task they have to perform. Would you be averse to a general measure for an 8 hour day ?—No, I would not.

A-554. Can you throw any light on the reason why shorter hours were turned down by the Port Trust ?—It was because the majority opinion was that it would make the working of the Port dearer. But my opinion, and the opinion of some others, is quite different. First of all, supposing they were to employ two shifts ; everyone in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay would have to do the same, and the result would be that it would not make our port dearer than other ports, as it would apply to all ports. That is the first reason. There is no reason to fear competition or diversion of trade ; it is a fallacy to suppose, as some people do, that trade would be diverted to Madras, Calcutta or Bombay. My second point is that even if it is so we would take the risk of making the port dearer. My third point is : why should the burden of making the port dearer be put upon the shoulders of the labourers alone ; there are the clerks and officers ; they all work 6 or 7 hours. I see no reason for putting the burden of making the port dearer solely upon the shoulders of the labourers ; there would be many other factors. My fourth point is this : I have been studying what is called labour and fatigue literature, and I think that if the labourers worked only 8 or 9 hours a day and 6 hours at night, they would be more efficient and the municipality or any other employer would be able to get more work out of them. That is really a matter of scientific investigation. Of course so far it is merely theory for I have made no practical experiments in this respect but I am convinced from a study of the literature on this subject that that is so.

A-555. Do you think it would be a good thing to insert a fair wages clause in all labour contracts?—I should be in favour of legislation with that object, but I should like to know how it is to be done.

A-556. Are you in favour of the fixation of a minimum living wage for the working classes of Karachi?—I am in favour of that for all places.

A-557. Do you agree that the working classes should be given the franchise on the adult basis to enable them to exercise their influence on legislation?—Our Municipality has passed the adult franchise already, but the Government has not accepted it.

A-558. *Mr. Cliff*: Will you tell me how long you have served on the Karachi Municipality?—I have been for 15 years a member and for 8 years its President.

A-559. And have you been connected with social work for many years?—For many years. For the last 20 years I think.

A-560. You have expressed the opinion that the fundamental thing to be aimed at is education?—Yes; without that nothing can be done.

A-561. I gather from your answers to questions that you believe that education will afford the greatest measure of protection against oppression?—Yes.

A-562. Is that your view?—Yes.

A-563. What is the rate of taxation in the Municipality?—14 per cent. on the rental value of the house.

A-564. Is there any minimum?—We do not charge anything on houses of an annual rental value of less than Rs. 50.

A-565. It is 14 per cent. on the rental value of houses of an annual rental value of Rs. 50?—Yes.

A-566. You have answered a question as to how you deal with trade unions on the municipality: would you make clear what was the exact resolution. Is it a resolution that you will not recognize or deal with a trade union which is represented by outsiders, or is it a resolution that municipal councillors shall not represent trade unions?—That municipal councillors shall not represent trade unions.

A-567. So that in present cases you are prepared to deal with trade union officers who are not employed by the municipalities?—The municipality is, but personally I should prefer that they should be officered by their own men.

A-568. You want the work-people to be educated and trained so as to be able to represent themselves and become officers of the union?—Yes; otherwise I personally feel that they would again always be subjected to pressure of those outsiders in office; I do not mean in every case, but in many cases.

A-569. You further give an expression of opinion in your memorandum with regard to International Conventions. Am I to take it that you are in favour of the adoption of International Conventions that can be explained to and understood by the people?—Yes.

A-570. Will you tell me, in view of your experience in the Karachi Municipality, what is the attitude and general policy of the municipality to the union of sweepers; how do you deal with them?—We have a very favourable attitude towards them.

A-571. Have you any machinery which provides for regular consideration of matters arising out of employment?—All letters, grievances or anything of that kind that are reported to us are considered by the Health Committee, by the Health Officer, by the President and the Management Committee; such matters are considered very favourably; we try to go into every case that is represented to us.

A-572. Is the Health Committee in this case the Committee which governs the employment of the sweepers?—They control all sanitation, dispensaries and maternity homes.

A-573. So that if the sweepers desire representations to be made, they are made to that Committee?—Yes.

A-574. Can they appear before that Committee to make personal representations?—They go to the Health Officer, but they approach individual members as well.

A-575. Apart from that form of representation, there has not yet been devised any standing machinery?—No, there has not yet been any case in which such machinery has been found necessary.

A-576. *Mr. Ahmed*: In your memorandum you say: "The unemployment is considerable in the City of Karachi". Do you think the development of the salt industry would greatly relieve this unemployment?—Yes, if it were properly fostered, but I am

sorry to say it is not. If the Government properly fostered that industry by making proper transport arrangements, such as roads and channels, that industry might absorb thousands of labourers.

A-577. So that you are in favour of facilities by the Government of India to help the salt industry ?—Absolutely ; all we want is an arrangement to be made by the Government of India to carry the salt.

A-578. You see I have not got the local experience, but I hear a great deal in the Assembly. The salt industry in India requires a lot of facilities from the Government. The representatives of Madras in the Legislative Assembly are constantly making the point. What steps do you suggest should be taken on your behalf by the Government of India ; do you ask for bounties or other facilities for developing the salt industry here ? I ask you this as an experienced President of the Municipality ?—I am in touch with the salt movement, and I say that the Government of India with very little expense could foster this industry so that thousands of workers could be given satisfactory employment.

A-579. What sort of facilities would you ask for ?—Only transport facilities, water channels and roads to carry the salt to be shipped to Calcutta ; that is all we want at present.

A-580. In your memorandum under the head "Education" you say : "There is no industrial area in Karachi and the children are taught in all schools. Labouring class is free to attend any school and many are taking advantage of the educational facilities". But do you really think that the people are sufficiently educated to understand the use of the franchise for the election of Members of the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council at Bombay ?—As far as my experience of Karachi City is concerned, they understand very well.

A-580a. Do you suggest that the election of representatives of labour instead of nomination by Government would be helpful ?

The Chairman : I really do not think this witness can answer that ; it can only be an individual opinion.

A-581. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I see that the Industrial Census Report says that Karachi is essentially not an industrial city and I find you say the same thing ; you say that there is no industrial area in Karachi and therefore relatively few people earn their living in industrial concerns in Karachi ?—Yes, and they are chiefly for transit trade.

A-582. They are chiefly engaged in trade and commerce ?—Yes.

A-583. As there is no industry here worth speaking of, why is it that overcrowding in Karachi is worse than it is in Bombay or Calcutta which are great industrial towns ?—I will tell you why. On one side of Karachi you have Sind and on the other Marwar, the Makran coast and the Baluchistan coast. There is no rain in those places and there has been famine for many years. The result is that people come from Sind, Cutch, Kathiawar and the Makran coast and they like to live in Karachi because they can at least find something here while they cannot find anything in their own places.

A-584. You have made Karachi very attractive for them to come and stay here though there is no industry or work here ?—They can do nothing in their own places ; I mean the agricultural industry is absolutely down. On all sides of Karachi you will see that vast areas are mere deserts. The fact is that because they can get at least something in Karachi they come here.

A-585. I see also from these statistics that there are over 10,000 huts in Karachi of which 6,000 are in the area under the direct control of the Municipality ?—Now there are 9,000.

A-586. That makes the matter still worse. The increase in the number of huts is not due to the existence of industry as we understand it ?—No.

A-587. Traders and others come from outside and live in Karachi because it is such an attractive place ?—People come because in the surroundings there is nothing for them to eat.

A-588. I see that you suggest that the hours of labour ought to be reduced and in your note you say that it should be reduced to 9 hours in the day and 6 hours in the night. That will be 15 hours out of 24. At the present moment they work for 21 or 22 hours by shifts ?—Yes.

A-589. Do you not think that by reducing the existing working hours of the port from 21 or 22 hours to 15 hours you will be adding to the cost of the trade and commerce on which Karachi is existing at the present moment ?—No, I do not mean that. I mean two shifts at night.

A-590. But my point is if you reduce the working time from 21 or 22 hours to 15 hours....—I am not suggesting that. I am suggesting that instead of one shift working at night there should be two shifts.

A-591. You do not want to cut down the working time of the port, you only want to cut down the working hours of the workers?—Yes.

A-592. *Mr. Joshi* : You have stated your attitude towards the union, namely, that you would like the union to have its own officers from among its members, and you do not want any Municipal Councillor to be an officer of the union?—Or any outsider.

A-593. Do you not think that some difficulty is created by this attitude? In the first place, I think you will agree with me that you are restricting the right of the voters in elections. You tell them that they ought not to elect their officers as municipal councillors. The statute does not put down any restriction, but you by your attitude restrict the right of certain voters in the municipality?—Human nature is everywhere the same. If you appoint outsiders, they will know how to suppress the workers. My opinion is that they can make very good officers in a very short time from among themselves.

A-594. You do not see the difficulty. I hope you know this, that municipal servants are not allowed by your Municipal Act to become members of the municipality, and if they become officers they cannot be elected because they will be municipal servants. You will never allow any officer of the municipal union whether he is an employee or outsider to become a member of the municipality, so that you restrict their right of voting?—They can vote for other representatives.

A-595. But they may have confidence in a representative who is a member of the municipality, and in that case you want to prevent them electing a man in whom they have confidence?—I want to free them from any kind of subjugation.

A-596. I will give you another difficulty. In Great Britain, for instance, the working classes in order that their own working class men should become Members of Parliament used to pay their Members. If your employees want a really working class man to be a member of your municipality they may think of paying him because usually a working class man has no leisure; he must earn his livelihood. If they want him to be a member of the municipality he must be paid and if the union pays the member then he will be usually their officer?—If they elect one out of their own number, I will have no objection. What I do not want is an outsider, not in the trade, to become an officer.

A-597. But there is a legal restriction preventing such a man from becoming a member of the municipality?—I am willing to have that changed, if that is so. I can now give the figure which I said a while ago I would be supplying. There are 93,000 permanent labourers, and 82,000 daily wage earners of whom practically 70,000 are without work every day.

A-598. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : In your memorandum you say "The only way I can suggest is to foster industries." I take it that by this you mean that industries should be established which would be reasonably remunerative to the capitalist and would give a fair living wage to labour?—Yes.

A-599. You say "The Government of Bombay has done nothing to help the people of Sind to carry out industrial schemes, etc." Will you please tell us what you really mean?—They have not done anything, that is all.

A-600. The reason I am asking this question is to direct your attention to the fact that India has both a Central Government and the Provincial Governments. I want to know what a Provincial Government, within the powers vested in it, can do to foster industries?—I quite see your point of view, but let the Provincial Government fight out that point with the Central Government. We are only concerned with the Provincial Government to which we look for help.

A-601. You say you are in favour of legislation to enforce a minimum wage. I take it that your view is that a minimum wage should be fixed for Karachi; or is it your view that the Government of India should legislate and fix a minimum wage for the whole of India?—I am giving evidence so far as Karachi is concerned, but I would wish it for the whole of India.

A-602. The difficulty is that conditions are not the same all over India. In support of this view we have evidence in Karachi itself. One memorandum says that certain classes of labour are employed at from 6 annas to something like Rs. 1-8-0 per day. I want you to tell us whether it would be practicable to carry out the principle of a minimum wage throughout India?—It need not be one wage throughout India. At least we should know what is the minimum wage a man requires to live.

A-603. In different parts of India it varies?—But the minimum could be known.

A-601. The minimum wage in certain villages may be 8 annas which will be sufficient for a man to live upon, while in other villages he may require Rs. 1-8-0.—In the villages there might not be industries at all.

A-605. Do you think that there should be a fixed minimum wage for industries throughout India? Could it be uniform?—It may not be uniform.

A-606. You say you find that money is spent on liquor and ceremonies?—What is needed is propaganda and education.

A-607. You think that is practical?—It is like an epidemic which must be stopped.

A-608. *Colonel Russell*: In the first place, my question refers to welfare activities. You say in your Memorandum: "There is none. Some attempt was made, but somehow it was dropped." Can you tell us why the matter was dropped?—There are not sufficient workers, no interest is shown and no encouragement is given.

A-609. Is it not a matter for the Municipality and social workers?—Yes, I quite agree with you. I have merely made a statement of fact.

A-610. It was not being paid for by the Municipality?—No.

A-611. You say you have no doubt that dietary is one of the things which is largely responsible for the inefficiency of the labourer?—No doubt it is.

A-612. What exactly do you mean by that?—What they eat in the small hotels is wretched stuff.

A-613. Do you mean that it is poor food or insufficient food?—Both insufficient and very poor.

A-614. *The Chairman*: In reply to some questions you put in figures, which I must ask you to take back and have checked and put in a better form. Either the question was misunderstood or the answer was incorrect. Really they conflict with the figures that you have already handed in. It is not possible that there should be 175,000 labourers in Karachi, of whom 93,000 are permanent labourers and 82,000 on daily wages, and then, as you say, 80,000 who have no work for 365 days' in the year. It surely cannot be correct, that 80,000 men have not a single days work throughout the year?—No, that cannot be correct. "There are 93,000 permanent labourers, and 82,000 daily wage earners of whom practically 70,000 are without work everyday." What is meant by this is that a large proportion of the daily wage earners did not get employment all the year round; not that 70,000 persons or labourers are without work for 365 days in a year.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Dr. TARACHAND J. LALWANI, Chairman, Indian Seamen's Union
and Mr. MULCHAND M. KIRPALANI representing that Union,
Port Labour Union and Karachi Port Trust Labour Union.**

A-615. *The Chairman*: Dr. Tara Chand, are you yourself a seaman?—I am not a seaman.

A-616. Is your colleague a seaman?—He is not a seaman either.

A-617. What is your profession?—I am a medical practitioner, and my colleague is a pleader.

A-618. Can you give us the date of the formation of the Karachi Seamen's Union?—It was formed in the month of July 1927.

A-619. Is this Union affiliated to any other Union?—No, it is an entirely independent Union. It is not affiliated to any other seamen's association. It came into being in July 1927, that is two years and three months ago.

A-620. Can you give us the membership of the Union?—500.

A-621. Can you supply us with a balance sheet of your Union?—I can.

A-622. I should like to have that. What period would that cover?—It would cover the entire period of two years.

A-623. I suppose with the balance sheet there will be a report?—Yes, I will give you the report.

A-623a. I should like to have that. Then with regard to the memorandum which you have submitted to us, I wish you had been able to let us have it a little earlier?—My written memorandum was the first to be sent. Mr. Mulchand, my colleague, is the author of the memorandum which I have submitted.

A-624. You say that the Indian Merchant Shipping Act lays down rules for the allotment system, but it is a dead law, and instructions should be issued to Masters and Owners of Steamers that it should be put into practical operation forthwith. Do you mean that the law is not carried out with regard to Karachi, or throughout India?—It is applicable throughout India.

A-625. How long has this law been in operation?—I think since 1923.

A-626. An Act passed six years ago is not in operation?—No, the provisions are not carried out.

A-627. Whose duty is it to see that the Law is carried out?—The Shipping Master.

A-628. I understand now that it is an optional law, and what you ask here really is that it should be made mandatory?—Yes.

A-629. And I presume your reason is that the sailors may be able to maintain their families during the time they are away at sea?—Yes.

A-630. Mr. Ahmed : Did you send a representative to the Trade Union Congress?—No, we have not sent any representative to the Trade Union Congress yet; we were invited by the Government of India to send a representative.

A-631. What was the previous practice and what is the existing practice with regard to recruitment?—About two years ago one *ghat serang* was appointed by the Customs Office, who used to select a number of men and present them at the shipping office, and the Captain used to select whichever he wanted. Since the Union was created it has made representations to the Shipping Master and the Collector of Customs, asking that the representative of our Union should be stationed there to present any number of men who may be required to go to sea. After some correspondence our man was allowed to present himself there. Since then our man has stood at the shipping office and whenever a crew is needed the men are presented to the Shipping Office. The Captain of the steamer comes and makes a selection from those who are presented to him.

A-632. Do you remember in this connection the Clow Committee Report? What was it about?—In about 1922 the Clow Committee's report made some recommendations as to how the recruitment should take place. There were two alternative recommendations. The first recommendation was that there should be an Advisory Board, representative of the employers, the unions, and the men employed, who should make the selections. The other recommendation was that the Shipping Master should select. I find that the first recommendation is certainly the better one: that is to say, that the employer and the union should sit together, form an Advisory Board and make selections.

A-633. What was the second alternative?—The second alternative was that the Shipping Master should recruit the men himself without the help of any one. Then he in his turn employs *ghat serangs*: these *ghat serangs* collect men, and naturally they make a lot of money over it.

A-634. Will you give your reasons?—The reasons are these. If you are going to entrust the work to the *ghat serangs*, it is a well known fact that they will take a lot of money. There is no doubt about it. That is the greatest drawback in the second alternative.

A-635. Have you any idea how much the *ghat serangs* charge the men?—They charge from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for every man employed.

A-636. And besides that do they get anything from the employers?—They get a fixed amount. The other system is that the Union and the representatives of the employers and employees sit together in consultation with the Government representative. That is the most desirable and most workable system; it does away with a lot of illegal gratification.

A-637. Have you heard anything about the system in existence in Calcutta?—In Calcutta the system is that the *ghat serangs* collect a number of men and take them to the Shipping Office.

A-638. The *ghat serang* system is becoming a standing nuisance?—Yes.

A-639. Did you take any steps when the Clow Committee's Report was submitted?—Our Union was not in existence then.

A-640. The Government have not taken any effective steps. Then in your written memorandum I find certain passages as to which there is possibly a mistake. You say "If there were a separate shipping office a complete register of all the seamen could be maintained and the *serangs* could be entrusted with the work of selecting the necessary quota of seamen." Do you think that statement should be corrected?—It should be. We do not want that.

A-641. What improvements do you suggest in regard to the housing problem? We have heard a great deal with regard to the housing problem?—Most of the seamen at Karachi and Keamari live in houses belonging to the Karachi Port Trust, in the village that you saw yesterday morning. Other seamen live in huts belonging to the Municipality, and they pay Re. 1 per annum as ground rent to the municipality. Out of a population of about 40,000 that live there, at least 10,000 are seamen. They have their own huts built there.

A-642. We were asking Mr. Downie this morning certain questions about rest houses for Indian seamen. May I ask you whether the Indian seamen have got any club, institutions or playgrounds?—They have no club, institution or playground. There is only one seamen's rest house that is open to Indians, but for ten years not a single Indian has taken advantage of it.

A-643. There is a seamen's rest house, but no Indians go there. What is the reason?—The reason is quite obvious. In the first place, the amount charged is enormous. They charge about Rs. 2-8-0 per day, with the result that the ordinary seamen getting Rs. 22 per mensem can hardly take advantage of it.

A-644. Are you aware that the International Convention recommended that there should be a club, an Indian institution for seamen and their children, and rest houses?—I have read about it. They are very necessary in Karachi.

A-645. Government has not taken any action?—No, absolutely none.

A-646. Do you know that Dr. Pillai has been deputed to this country and that he has been gathering information and sending it to Geneva?—He has not so far come to Karachi.

A-647. What does an Indian seaman get per month for his rations?—Rs. 19-11-0, while a European seaman's cost of living is £3 per month.

A-648. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is that what he gets or what he spends?—That is what he gets, under the articles of agreement.

A-649. *Mr. Ahmed*: What do European seamen get?—(*Mr. Mulchand*): it is nearly five times that of an Indian seaman. An Indian seaman gets Rs. 22 a month, fireman Rs. 27, coal trimmer Rs. 21, greaser Rs. 32, *serang* Rs. 65 though he only gets Rs. 50 sometimes.

A-650. Is warm clothing supplied?—No, it is not supplied. India being a hot country they particularly need it when they go abroad.

A-651. In the Mediterranean they will need warm clothing?—They need it badly.

A-652. What have you to say about the accommodation on the steamer?—(*Dr. Tarachand*): It is very bad. About 20 to 30 seamen are put into one room in which I personally could not sit for more than two minutes. They are huddled together like sheep.

A-653. Was that on the open deck?—No, in an enclosure. What we recommended was that not more than four or five of them should be put together in a cabin.

A-654. What about their health?—I have said that the health of the seamen is good and that they are able to carry on their work very well.

A-655. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is it a fact that in 1926 full crews were recruited from Karachi?—Yes, in 1926 and during the War.

A-656. Why was the practice abandoned?—The practice has been abandoned without any reason.

A-657. Does that cause any hardship?—Very great hardship.

A-658. What sort of hardship?—The hardship is this, that during the last two years only 310 men per annum have been recruited from the city of Karachi. Now whenever any steamer comes to the city of Karachi, the crew instead of being taken from the city of Karachi is wired for from Calcutta or Bombay. For some years these people have been fighting and they could not move anybody. But since the Union came into existence we made a representation to the Shipping Masters that they should not take men from Calcutta or Bombay, but the shipping companies said that they could not do anything in the matter. About three months ago a full crew was sent for from Calcutta.

The seamen of Karachi were so much annoyed that most of them went to the city to beat them so that they might run away and not return to our port to get employment. A similar practice existed in the city of Bombay some years ago; crews were being invited from Calcutta while the people in Bombay were unemployed. Whenever people from Calcutta came to Bombay they were hammered; so much so, that the authorities took note of it and declared Bombay a shipping port. The people of Karachi have that precedent in view and naturally, being unemployed for a very long time, they feel very irritated and might lose their balance at any moment. It is but natural in the case of absolutely unemployed men.

A-659. What is your opinion with regard to legislation on the basis of the International Convention's recommendations with regard to seamen? Have you studied that?—These recommendations must certainly be carried out in India. I have studied them. Those recommendations particularly with regard to hours should be carried out. European seamen on board the steamers have to work only eight hours, whereas our seamen have to work for nine hours during day time and do an extra duty of two hours in the night watch. Thus they work for 11 hours. They are not paid for over-time, whereas their European colleagues are paid.

The Chairman: That is set out in the Convention.

A-660. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* What about the question of unemployment insurance? Do you want it?—We want it badly. That is very important.

A-661. Is there a great deal of bribery rampant in the port of Karachi with regard to employment?—At present there is very little, because our own men stand there.

A-662. I notice one of your recommendations is that there should be a separate shipping office. Why is that desirable?—We want a shipping office in the port of Karachi. At present there is none. (*Mr. Mulchand*): If there were a full time shipping master he could advertise in the English papers that there are so many unemployed seamen in Karachi. Without that, the people concerned do not know that there are so many men waiting here for employment.

A-663. The Indian Seamen's Union of Bombay make a complaint that in regard to compensation to be paid to workmen working in ships registered in Great Britain there is a great deal of delay. Is that the case here in Karachi also?—(*Dr. Tarachand*): Yes.

A-664. Would you like to have that remedied by means of legislation?—Yes, by legislation.

A-665. You answered a question with regard to the accommodation on board steamers. What sort of accommodation would you like to have?—The maximum number in each cabin should not be more than four.

A-666. How much space would you like to have?—Just as much space as there is in a second class cabin of four berths.

A-667. Of whom is the managing staff of the Port Trust composed? Are there any Indians?—With the exception of the store keeper, they are all Europeans.

A-668. Do you want better representation on the Port Trust?—Certainly we do require better representation. That is our first grievance. The constitution of the Port Trust is very badly devised. There are no representatives of labourers. There are four representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, two from the Indian Merchants' Association, and two from the Buyers' and Shippers' Association. All the work is done for the Port Trust by the dock labourers; they are the people who do all the work. As a matter of fact we should have four representatives on the Port Trust Board like the merchants.

A-669. What would be the advantage? Would you be able to improve your conditions if you had better representation?—Absolutely. In the first place, the dock labourers who are loading and unloading ships, slinging and unslinging, are at present working under the contractors. The Port Trust gives the work to the contractors, the contractors pay something to these men and they carry on. They have not got steady work and regular incomes; they get work for two or three days and then they are turned away. Even if they work for fifteen or twenty years and then die, their families do not get anything. They do not get rent or free quarters. There is no unemployment or sickness insurance. If they fall sick, they are not looked after. Yesterday, when you visited the place you saw a sick man; he could not get any treatment unless some philanthropic person gave him medical assistance.

A-670. What have you to say about the hours of work at night?—They are absolutely intolerable and unfit for human beings. Labour at night time is a great

hardship for people who have to keep awake and work for eleven hours at a stretch. They hardly get one meal a day and with one meal a day it is inhuman to make a man work for eleven hours.

A-671. Just tell me something about the question of rents at Keamari and non-payment of rent ?—The village you saw yesterday morning was built in 1900, not for the purpose of the Port Trust employees, but for the dock labourers there. Before this they were living in huts like those you saw in the Lyari quarter. But on account of plague all the village was burnt down and the Port Trust started this village where it at present stands. At that time they were charging Rs. 1-12-0 per month as rent. In five or six years they raised the rent to Rs. 5 and Rs. 6, but on account of agitation they brought it down to Rs. 5. For the shops they were charging Rs. 4.

A-672. I am not concerned with shops. Suppose a worker falls into arrears with his rent, what is done ?—(*Mr. Mulchand*) : According to them there is a criminal law by which they can sue the man in the criminal Court. Under the Port Trust Act, they can go to the Honorary Magistrate's court at Keamari. If they do not pay, a distress warrant will be issued, the property collected and sold. There was the case of one Hakim Sahib. Property belonging to him worth Rs. 1,000 was sold by the Honorary Magistrate for Rs. 29 and the shock to the man was so great that he died soon after.

A-673. Was that a civil or criminal proceeding ? Section 84 of the Port Trust Act says : " All fees and sums due on account of property for the time being vested in the Board, all the arrears of rents, charges and rates due imposed, under this Act may be recovered by summary proceedings before a magistrate." The law cannot apply to rents due to the Port Trust but not under the Act ?—It refers to fees and sums due on account of property for the time being vested in the Board.

A-674. Are there many cases ?—Yes. People do not pay rent.

A-675. Why are they not able to pay their rent ?—They are too poor. They work for two days and then for two weeks they are doing nothing. When they work at night if the employer finds there is no more need for them he dismisses them and pays them only for the two hours although they were engaged for the whole night.

A-676. Is your Union in favour of an Unemployment Insurance scheme ?—Yes.

A-677. And also in favour of a scheme for payment of wages on a weekly basis ?—That would be better.

A-678. Under the Port Trust Act passed in 1924 children under 12 were prohibited from working. What have you to say about that ?—(*Dr. Lalwani*) : They are not working at present.

A-679. Would you like the age raised to 12 or 14 ?—It would be better if it were raised to 16—better for the health of the children.

A-680. What is your opinion about the employment of women on this work ?—It is not such as to require women.

A-681. Is there any arrangement made for the resting of dock labourers during their intervals of work ?—(*Mr. Mulchand*) : You see them sitting under the wagons, and instances have occurred when the wagons have moved over those people and killed them. We have requested that a waiting hall should be provided for them. The only roof they have is the sky above.

A-682. What arrangements are there for bathing and cleaning themselves, or for providing soap and hot water ?—None. There should be a bathing room and arrangements for changing into working clothes.

A-683. Has your Union anything to say with regard to the fixation of a minimum living wage for the workers ?—(*Dr. Lalwani*) : The Union would be very pleased to see it. They think there ought to be a minimum wage. The minimum wage for one coolie should be at least 20 rupees, excluding rent and other amenities.

A-684. Is it your opinion that there is general starvation among the workers ?—There is.

A-685. *Mr. Joshi* : In the memorandum from the Seamen's Union it is stated that you do not want racial discrimination as regards hours of work as well as rations. You do not mention accommodation ?—We do.

A-686. You are aware that under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act such a discrimination does exist ?—Yes, but we do not want it.

A-687. You want that Act to be amended ?—Yes.

A-688. In the memorandum from the other Union you state that you suspect that the Government wants to postpone the Bill as regards hours of work of the Port Trust employees, and also the Bill regarding the representation of the Port Trust employees on the body, on the ground that this Royal Commission has been appointed?—Yes, that is so.

A-689. You naturally feel aggrieved that this Commission should be made a ground for postponing action?—We do.

A-690. What do you expect from the Commission? You expect the Commission to say that they do not desire such postponement?—Exactly.

A-691. You can certainly take it for granted that the Commission does not want any postponement of such action?—If that is given to us, we are satisfied.

Mr. Joshi : I am sure the Chairman will give it to you if you write to him.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. R. K. SIDHVA, on behalf of Workmen and Labourers of the Flour Mills.

A-692. *The Chairman* : From the memorandum given to us I take it that you are not a worker in the flour mills yourself?—No.

A-693. May I know what your usual vocation is?—A merchant.

A-694. You have been asked by the workmen and labourers in the flour mills to make this representation to us?—Yes.

A-695. Can you tell us in what way you were deputed?—I have taken a general interest in labour union affairs for the last ten years. I have been associated with several unions in the capacity of President, Secretary and Committee member. These mill men have not their own union, and they came to me voluntarily knowing that the Royal Commission was coming. They put their grievances before me, and said that they were being victimized, and that there were many hardships. About half a dozen of their representatives first came to me, and narrated the whole story. I noted down the details, and I said I would like to hear a larger number of the workers. They came subsequently with a larger number, and told me their grievances. On personal enquiry subsequently, I found they were correct. Therefore I thought it my duty to place them before the Commission. I told them they should come and place their views before you, but they said they were not prepared to do so; that they had been threatened that if they did anything of the kind they would be dismissed from the service.

A-696. I take it, then, that there is at present no organization among these workers?—No.

A-697. Is there any movement to have an organization amongst themselves?—They told me that they had made an effort some time ago. I also told them to start a union, but they said that no sooner any principal workers took part in it their fate would be dismissal. I share their views, because I have had experience of the Tramways. I was the President of the Tramways organization, and when I tried to form a union 37 conductors were dismissed straight away by the proprietors. Since then the tramway people have never ventured to form a union. There are nearly 400 men in the employ of the tramway company. In 1924-25 they went on a lightning strike, the effect of which was good; their grades were revised. They struck later in 1928, when about 30 conductors were sacked.

A-698. I may say that we will consider carefully the memorandum you have been good enough to submit to us, but the function of this Commission is not to act as a Court of Appeal between workers and their employers. It is our business to get a general view of the conditions of labour in this and other industries, but it is certainly not possible for us to be in any sense a Court of Appeal?—Quite so.

A-699. All I can say is that I have read this memorandum carefully, and I think my colleagues have too, and we will take it in that sense as a part of our evidence of the general labour conditions in Karachi and in India. You have suggested to us that these people were threatened that if they came and gave evidence before us they would be in danger of dismissal?—Yes. I might add that some of the women workers and male workers were told distinctly a few days ago that they must say they were working the hours as their master said, and that if they said they were working 12 hours without a

break they would be dismissed. This was made particularly clear to the women workers. I have evidence to that effect.

A-700. Why did you not write to the Factory Inspector ?—These things were brought to my notice very recently.

A-701. This factory like others is working under the Factory Law. When we visited it we examined the book which contains the report of the Factory Inspector and we found nothing there to tally with your statement ?—You will agree with me, sir, that because it is under the Factory Act, whatever notice is put up should be in conformity with the Act. If this is not done they would come under the clutches of the Act. They say that they are following the provisions of the Act very carefully, but it is not so. The Factory Inspector does not come always, but even if he comes it is but natural that these people who have very little voice do not place before him the real situation. They are simply ignorant.

A-702. But they apparently have approached you ?—Yes, because they know I do not belong to the official class.

A-702a. It is open to any person to give information to the Factory Inspector ?—This information was given to me recently and it will be given to the Factory Inspector in due course.

A-703. I think it is your duty to represent what you hear of breaches of the Act to the Factory Inspector who is appointed officer to see that the Act is carried out ?—Quite so.

A-704. *Mr. Clow* : When we visited the factory we were shown a list of the hours of work. That showed shifts of 12 hours with two intervals of an hour each. I take it from what you say that during these intervals the factory continues to run ?—Quite so. The factory works for 24 hours. There are two shifts of 12 hours. There is no break for recess and it is not a fact that the proprietors have employed more men in order to give recess.

A-705. *Mr. Birla* : Which is the factory you referred to just now ?—The Indian Flour Mill.

A-706. Is it a limited liability company ?—Yes.

A-707. Who are its directors ?—According to the 1928 report, the Chairman is Mr. C. M. Lobo and the Directors are Dr. Macnuchas and Dr. Pires and the Secretary is Mr. C. F. D'abres.

A-708. Who are the managing agents ?—I do not think there are any managing agents. I believe the Secretary manages the business.

A-709. Do you know any of the directors or the managing agents personally ?—Yes.

A-710. Did you bring this to their notice ?—No, I have not brought it to their notice.

A-711. Do you not think it your duty to bring it to their notice ?—I came to know of this only a couple of days before the Commission arrived in Karachi.

A-712. *Miss Power* : Can you tell me how many women are employed in the factory ?—About 17.

A-713. And is it your assertion that women are asked to work continuously for 12 hours without a break ?—Yes.

A-714. Do the women also work for half a day on Sundays ?—They do.

A-715. What work are they given on Sundays when the factory is closed ?—Generally cleaning of the machinery.

A-716. When the mill is not working ?—Yes, also otherwise.

A-717. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You say something about adult suffrage for men and women in your memorandum. Is that your personal opinion or the opinion of the men who were consulted ?—It is my opinion, but I know they would certainly welcome it. They would like to be represented in all the executive bodies for ventilating their grievances.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I would make a suggestion in regard to the charge that you have made in paragraph 2 of your memorandum,—that it would be advisable to get signatures or thumb marks of those who have levelled that charge and forward them to the Factory Inspector.

A-718. *Mr. Cliff* : Do I understand that all the 130 people who are employed in this mill turn up for cleaning on Sundays ?—Yes, all; even the engine men come.

A-719. You say that of the 130, 17 are women ?—Yes, about that figure.

A-720. When did you have this meeting of the workers and labourers?—About 2 days before the arrival of this Commission.

A-721. Was that a Sunday?—On Sunday also we held a meeting; before that we had a meeting.

A-722. Where did you hold the meeting?—In my own compound. I invariably hold meetings of union people in my compound.

A-723. How many were there?—About 100.

A-724. What was the statement that was made with regard to victimization?—I told them that it would be far better if they themselves were to go and give evidence. But they would not come out and therefore I thought it my duty to place the facts before the Commission.

A-725. Was any statement made by some that they had been threatened?—They did make a statement.

A-726. How many people made that statement?—About 10 or 12.

A-727. Who threatened?—May be they said the manager; the Secretary, or whoever it might be, but one does not know—some superior officer.

A-728. *Mr. Ahmed*: Besides your being a merchant and the President of the Tramway Conductors, what are you, would you tell us *Mr. Sidhva*?—In my capacity as a public servant I am a municipal councillor, a Port Trustee.

A-729. You mean Port Commissioner?—Yes.

A-730. What else?—A member of the North Western Railway Advisory Board, Secretary of the Health Association.

A-731. Have you anything to do with postmen?—I am the President of the Postmen and Lower Grade Staff Union for Sind and Baluchistan, lower grade.

A-732. And I take it, as such, you are in direct touch with these workmen?—Certainly. Therefore they come to me.

A-733. During our visit to the Indian Flour Mills Ltd., Karachi, yesterday, I was supplied with a statement showing the number of hours the workers work. Have you seen the statement and is that correct?—I saw it yesterday.

A-734. I think that is correct and you tender that as part of your evidence?—Yes.

A-735. It is said there that the workers work on Sundays. That is correct, is it not?—Yes.

A-736. In your memorandum you say that workers should be provided with free, healthy and sanitary quarters. Can you tell me whether any other local body or private person has provided quarters for the labourers?—Yes, the Municipality is a local body and has provided houses to a certain extent. You must have seen the other day some good specimens of sweepers' quarters.

A-737. The next item is free medical relief. Is there any other agency which renders medical aid to the labourer?—Yes. I just stated to you that I am the Honorary Secretary of the Health Association and the primary duty of that Association is to render medical aid to women labourers. For maternity purposes only we have got seven trained nurses with two lady doctors. Karachi comprises of seven quarters, to each of which a nurse is deputed. The nurses visit each and every house. This was started from a purely private donation. *Mr. Isardas* gave a lakh of rupees and we got Rs. 50,000 from the public. From the interest on these sums together with a grant of Rs. 7,000 that we get from the Municipality and Rs. 6,000 from the Government this institution is maintained. Its annual expenditure is Rs. 27,000 with no additional increase in the income. But our work in the labour class has very much increased, and we asked the Government to increase the grant. Government said that they have not got money now.

A-738. *The Chairman*: I have just one word, *Mr. Sidhva*. From what we have heard of your wonderful activities, there could be no more suitable person than yourself to take steps to clear up this question as to whether the Factory Act has or has not been broken in this respect. I understand that you are willing to put yourself in touch with the Inspector in order that we may be sure that if it can be shown that there is anything wrong it shall be set right?—Yes.

A-739. Is the Factory Inspector resident here?—He is not here.

A-740. Is he moving about?—He is in the Bombay Presidency; he occasionally pays a visit here. I will put myself in touch with him.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. MINOCHER COWASJI, of Messrs. Cowasji and Sons, Stevedores.

A-741. *The Chairman* : You represent a firm of Stevedores at Karachi ?—Yes, Sir.

A-742. I take it that it is under your control that the coaling operations take place ?—Yes.

A-743. Are you the only firm of Stevedores ?—No, there are several other firms, beside ourselves.

A-744. But you are, may I say, the principal firm ?—Yes, one of the principal firms.

A-745. Some of my colleagues went to see some of the coaling operations in the course of yesterday, and would like to ask you some questions, and for that reason we have summoned you. Do you employ your own labour, or do you employ contractors ?—We employ our own labour. We have a system by which we employ what are called *Jemadars*, who bring the workmen.

A-746. You pay the headman for the whole of the work done by his gang ?—Yes.

A-747. Do you know what wages the headman pays to his individual workers ?—No. In many cases we inquire what is being paid individually. We satisfy ourselves that what they draw from us is paid to the men or women.

A-748. In that case where does the ganger get his profit if you insist that he pays out to the workers precisely what you give him ?—We pay him at the rate of Rs. 2 per day, whereas we pay the worker only one rupee a day.

A-749. *Miss Power* : You pay the wages to the *Jemadar* at the rate of Rs. 2, and what do you pay to the workmen ?—Rs. 1-2-0.

A-750. Out of the Rs. 2 the headman has to pay Rs. 1-2-0 ?—No. At the close of the day we count the number of men, women and children employed. There are 80 men and 20 women. To the men we pay at the rate of Rs. 1-2-0, women 0-13-0, and we hand over all the money to the *Jemadar*.

A-751. How many women are employed in these gangs ?—When we employ a gang of 50 men, there are about 10 to 12 women working, that is to say about 15 to 20 per cent. of the total number of workers in coaling operation, bunkering ships or landing coal ex-lighters on to the stacking areas and re-loading lighters ex-dépôts are women.

A-752. Is any differentiation made between the work done by men and women ?—The women are supposed only to carry the baskets.

A-753. Empty baskets ?—No, full baskets.

A-754. The men fill the baskets ?—Yes, or raise them on the stages.

A-755. We saw a number of women raising the baskets on the stages ?—They are not called upon to do so, but if they are willing they are allowed to do it. Hardly one or two women out of the whole gang do this staging work.

A-756. Is there any limit to the age of the children employed ?—In fact we do not allow any children to work on our works. But since they work in a family group, we have to employ them. At times we have attempted to employ only male labour, but the family refused to come to work.

A-757. In point of fact, you recognize the employment of children because you say you pay them ?—In a gang we do not employ more than, say, three children, and they are paid at the rate of 6 annas a day, and they are only employed on passing out empty baskets.

A-758. Do you make any enquiry as to the age of the children included in the family group ?—No.

A-759. In spite of the fact that there is a law which prohibits children being employed under 12 ?—They do not do any hard work at all.

A-760. Still they are employed. How can you tell, whether or not they are doing any hard work ?—Because they are physically incapable of doing any hard work.

A-761. There were some boys we saw yesterday who were lifting the full loads. At any rate you countenance the employment of children ?—We do not.

A-762. Who pays them the 6 annas ?—We pay 6 annas to the children, but there are only 2 or 3 of them out of a gang of 50 or 60.

A-763. What is the weight of the load that is lifted ?—About 50 pounds.

A-764. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Cowasji, you say that women and children are employed on account of the family system. We have been hearing a lot yesterday and to-day about the great amount of unemployment there is in Karachi, of thousands of able bodied men looking for a job all round Karachi, and yet you employ women and children?—That is because in the coaling operations, we have only one class of labour who will handle coal. When we wanted more coal labour, the other group of labour would not come forward to handle coal.

A-765. How many are there in a gang?—50 or 60.

A-766. And there would be three children, and how many men and how many women?—There will be 12 to 15 women and the rest men.

A-767. *Mr. Ahmed*: There are a number of gangs?—Yes.

A-768. And the *Jemadar* is supposed to be familiar with the work of these gangs and he is their headman. It is not your business to see whether there is any understanding between the headman and the gang. If there is any such understanding between the headman and the gang it is not your business to locate it?—We do make inquiries on occasions as to whether the men are paid their full wages, and we are told that they get their full wages.

A-769. You are told by the headman?—No, by the individual workers.

A-770. You hand over the money to the *Jemadar* at the rate of Rs. 1-2-0 per man, annas 13 per woman and annas 6 for every child. You do not count the money and hand it over to the *Jemadar*. You hand over the money according to the bill prepared by the *Jemadar*?—We count the amount due to each *Jemadar* or each gang, and we hand over the money to the *Jemadar*.

A-771. And it is not your concern to see how much has been distributed among the work-people?—I cannot do it. I cannot possibly do it.

A-772. You are in direct touch with the *Jemadar* only, the headman, to whom you pay Rs. 2 per day, and the *Jemadars* are rich people, never poor, and richly dressed?—I do not know whether they are rich people: their mode of living is the same as the other coolies.

A-773. *Mr. Clifff*: Do you employ men and women and children for discharging and bunkering?—We do not employ children at all, but family groups insist on bringing children, and we have to shut our eyes to it.

A-774. You shut your eyes to the children working?—Not to the working, but to the bringing.

A-775. I understand you to admit that there was a payment made to children for working?—Yes.

A-776. Is that against the law?—It may be against the law. But they say that the child is not under 12 years and we cannot help it.

A-777. It is not against the law if the child is above 12, but it is if it is under 12?—Exactly.

A-778. Are you to obey the law or the family?—We have to obey both on occasions.

A-779. Could you tell me what you pay per gang for bunkering coal?—We count the number of men employed, and we pay accordingly. It is not a fixed amount. We pay according to the number of men who turn out, whether they are 40, or 35 or 30. We count the number of men, women and children.

A-780. Have you fixed the rate of pay for the men, women and children?—I have not fixed the rate. It is the current rate prevailing.

A-781. What hours do they work?—They are supposed to work Port hours—from 7-30 to 1 and from 2 to 6-30. But as a rule they never turn up at 7-30. They always start one hour late.

A-782. Do you pay them for coming late?—Yes. We pay them full wages. Our difficulty is that we have to draw these working men from one class of people, and we have to shut our eyes to many things, and when they come late we cannot cut their rate.

A-783. What is the cost of labour bunkering coal per ton?—About annas 8 per ton, only for shipping coal, i.e., for bunkering from lighters during day time.

A-784. What is the price obtained for that?—It is all inclusive. We do not charge for labour only. We sell our own coal, and the charge for labour is included in our rate.

A-785. Are you always bunkering the coal that you sell?—Yes.

A-786. What is the difference between the market price of the coal you sell and the rate you obtain for bunkering?—We usually keep a margin of 8 to 12 annas for our profit on the whole transaction; that is, labour included.

A-787. Per ton ?—Yes, that is, the cost of the coal, labour, lighterage, towing, and so on.

A-788. You say the margin you obtain includes the cost of the coal. That is on the sale price. I want you to tell me the difference between the labour cost for bunkering coal per ton, and the price you obtain for the coal ?—You want the difference on the labour ?

Diwan Chaman Lall : What Mr. Cliff wants to know is the difference between the cost of coal, the market price, and the labour cost put on to it for bunkering purposes ?—We put on our eight annas a ton for our labour cost, i.e., for bunkering from lighters during day time.

A-789. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : This is a serious matter and I want you to look at it from a serious point of view. You made an admission that you have no way of telling whether there are children under 12 employed or not. There is a law on the subject under which you will be liable for prosecution if it is true that you have children under 12 employed under you.—There is no method of telling whether they are there or not.

A-790. For all you know there may or may not be children under 12 employed by you ?—Exactly. There is no method of finding it out.

A-791. Have you had any trouble with these people who bunker coal or load and unload ships ?—No.

A-792. Did you ever try to stop them from bringing their children ? Did you ever take any effective steps in that direction ?—We often tell them that they should not bring their children and that we will not allow them. But when we go away they bring in their children.

A-793. Have you any records of written notices issued to the gangmen to that effect ?—No.

A-794. When was the last occasion when you prevented children from working there ?—I cannot remember. It may be about a year back.

A-795. Who were the gangmen whom you told this ? Do you remember their names ?—Practically I told everybody.

A-796. Can you give names ?—Yes, I can give names.

The Chairman : Mr. Chaman Lall, I would remind you and all my colleagues that this witness has come quite voluntarily to help us, and he should be treated as having come in that way.

A-797. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : One more point. Why do you not deal directly with the workers in regard to the payment of wages ?—It is impossible to deal directly with them.

A-798. Instead of paying the money to the gangmen, can you not directly pay it to the workers straight away ; It is just as easy.—It may be easy, but it is not practicable.

A-799. Why ?—We tried to do this. Before we introduced this system two years back, we had actually muster rolls and we used to make weekly payments and make the payments individually to every man and woman. Of course it was a long and tedious process.

A-800. Your only objection is that it is a long and tedious process ?—It would be better if we could adopt it.

A-801. Your only objection is that it is long and tedious ?—Yes, it is long and tedious.

A-802. Is it a fact that some of your gangmen or all your gangmen get paid for ten workers or so when they have employed only about five or six workers on the work ?—No, they cannot do it, because at the close of the day we count the number of men and pay them accordingly. It may happen this way. When we want 60 coolies they are expected to bring in about 12 or 15 women and the remainder men. If we do not take steps to verify the number of men and women, they may bring in more women than is generally allowed.

A-803. May I put it to you, whether it would not lead to better treatment of the workers, so that they may not be in any way put upon by the gangmen, if you adopted the system of the direct payment of wages inspite of its being somewhat long and tedious ?—But the coolies do not make any representation to us. If they are satisfied why should we change the system ? There is no reason to change our method.

The witness : Sir, I should like to make a statement. In last night's papers it was stated that the Commission paid a visit to the coal stacks where they found small children hard at work. I should say, sir, that you saw them at play rather than at work. It would be more appropriate to say that.

A-804. *Mr. Joshi* : How many men do you employ in your stevedoring and coal bunkering work ?—On an average we employ about four or five hundred men.

A-805. Do all these men get work daily ?—When I say on an average 400 or 500 men, one day I might have 200 men and another day, I may have 1,000 men.

A-806. How many men are there in the gangs you employ for your work ?—I have said it is on an average 400 or 500.

A-807. I am trying to find out how many days per month or per week your men get work ?—The men I employ are getting work for twenty days a month.

A-808. You cannot give them work for all the days in the month ?—I cannot employ them fully for the whole period.

A-809. Suppose you employ a smaller number of people and give them work for all the days, would there be any difficulty ?—No, our business is peculiar. We may have only two steamers to-day and to-morrow we may have 12 steamers. The men I employ on 12 steamers to-day I cannot employ on two steamers to-morrow.

A-810. Suppose you have 500 men under you while you want only 300 men on an average for your work. Then you leave about 200 men without any employment for ten days in a month. Suppose you stevedores co-operate, could you not find a way of putting an end to this under-employment ?—I do not think it will work.

A-811. Suppose we say there shall be co-operation by some kind of scheme which may be supervised by Government authorities for pooling together all your resources in men so that unemployment may be avoided ?—I do not think that the system would work, where the interests of the stevedores are concerned.

A-812. You are looking at the question from the point of view of the interests of the stevedores ? I am asking you to look at the question from the point of view of the interests of the workers.—It may be possible, but it is not practicable.

A-813. Do you not think it desirable to consider a scheme like that if proposed ?—We have never tried it.

A-814. You would not mind considering a scheme like that ?—But we are not the only employers of labour in the port ; there are several others and I do not know what their views in the matter are.

A-815. Anyhow you think it a desirable thing ?—It may be a desirable thing, but it is not a practicable thing.

A-816. Supposing a practicable scheme is put before you for avoiding this unemployment, which is universal in all the ports and not peculiar to Karachi alone, would you mind considering it seriously ?—I would certainly study the scheme and give it my best consideration.

A-817. You will take steps to consult the stevedores and consider a scheme by which constant unemployment in the docks can be avoided ?—Yes.

The witness : May I put in a statement with regard to the defects of the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act ?

The Chairman : Yes, you may put in that statement. I may say that I and my colleagues are greatly obliged to you for attending at such short notice at our request.

(The witness withdrew.)

Miss R. PIGGOT, Honorary Secretary, Dais' Improvement Scheme, Hyderabad (Sind).

A-818. *The Chairman* : I gather that you can speak to us in two capacities, one on behalf of the Sind Branch of the all-India Women's Conference, and second, as Honorary Secretary to the Dais' Improvement Scheme, Hyderabad.—That is so, Sir.

A-819. We have heard a great deal of evidence about general questions of housing and various other things in the course of the day. We shall particularly value your evidence on questions connected with maternity where, I understand, you have great

experience, and if I may say so, have been able to do a great deal for women at those critical times. This is particularly a medical matter, and if my colleagues consent, I would ask our Medical Assessor, Colonel Russell in the first place to put questions. I hope that will be agreeable.—Quite.

A-820. *Colonel Russell* : It is generally admitted that the housing conditions for the working classes in Karachi are very poor. In your memorandum with regard to housing you say : “The health point of view leaves much to be desired”. Will you just indicate generally the points to which attention should be drawn in regard to housing in that connection ?—I visited about 8 factories in various places. I found that in Mirpur Khas in Thar Parkar the housing was really very good, but in all the other places I found the housing to be indifferent and in most places the people had built their own quarters.

A-821. In what directions was it unsatisfactory ?—The houses were so small, and rain had made them very damp in most places.

A-822. A question was raised this morning as to plinths for houses ?—Yes, that is most necessary.

A-823. You consider it most necessary to have plinths ?—Yes.

A-824. Have you any ideas as to the construction of a plinth ?—I am going, I hope, to build some houses in connection with this relief fund and I shall certainly build a plinth to everyone.

A-825. Of what do you construct a plinth ?—*Pucca* bricks.

A-826. In your memorandum you suggest that if accommodation were provided the houses would be occupied ?—Well, they are very curious people ; some like to live in one place and some another, but I did find in Mirapur Khas, where the houses were very good, they seemed to occupy them without any difficulty.

A-827. So that your opinion is that they would gladly occupy the houses if they were available ?—I think so, on the whole.

A-828. With regard to rent rates in various classes, can you give us any idea as to the percentage your figure of Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 per mensem bears to the amount of wages earned ? It varies very much in different places. All up-country is cheaper than Karachi ; Karachi is the most expensive place in every way.

A-829. What percentage of total wages would that be ?—I do not know that I can tell you exactly. Many of the houses are free ; the employers have supplied the huts and they do not charge any rents.

A-830. But in cases where rent is charged ?—I did not come across any charging rent, and they would not charge as much as that in the districts. It would more likely be Rs. 2 or Rs. 3.

A-831. You cannot give us any idea as to the proportion it bears to the total charges ?—I am afraid I cannot. I looked upon that as being a matter more for the men ; I did not study it from the women's point of view.

A-832. You say that up to date ventilation would not be appreciated ; but even though it is not appreciated, it should be introduced, I take it ?—Oh ! most decidedly. I think the best method is to have, as I have seen in some places, a little space is left open at the top where the roof and the walls meet ; that is very good and they do not mind that.

A-833. The incidence of tuberculosis, according to the Health Officer's report, at Karachi is very high ; do you associate that with housing conditions ?—I should think in Karachi very often that is so, but in the North what saves them is that they are very seldom in their houses. It is in the city that consumption is so very bad.

A-834. You speak of the infantile mortality as being “pathetic” ?—Yes, it is pathetic.

A-835. The word “pathetic” to a statistician is hardly measurable ; can you give me any exact figures : have you any statistics ?—No, but I know it is very very high. I can easily send you statistics if you would like to have them.

A-836. I will draw your attention to some figures Mr. Downie gave us this morning ; in the Port Trust area it is 158 per thousand births. Do you think that is low or high as compared with what you have experienced ?—In the case of maternal mortality we reduced it to 103 in Hyderabad by training the *dais*. That was the best in the whole of Sind. I hope to send figures about the infant mortality.

A-837. You are to be congratulated on getting it down to 103 ?—But, alas, it has gone up again now.

A-838. Can you give us any idea of the methods you have adopted for training these *dais*, because that is closely associated with the question of infantile mortality?—Yes. My plan is unique. You cannot get these women to come to the towns to be trained. I do not blame them: they cannot leave their homes and children, and in all probability if they left their homes they would lose all their practice. So I send a very experienced nurse who makes her centre in a certain place. The *dais* go to her every day there; she goes to the villages and lectures the *dais*, and we pay the *dais* As. 4 to As. 8 according as they come to the lectures. The nurse stays at that centre from 4 to 6 months. We only train the *dais*; I find that is quite enough. The *dais* pass examinations either of the *Dais Improvement Fund* or of the *Delhi Memorial Scholarships*, though the latter is impossible in the districts. Sometimes these classes consist of only 5 *dais*, though sometimes it is 19, and we have had 36.

A-839. It has been my experience in connection with Indian *dais* that unless they are very closely supervised, they lapse, if I may use that expression?—Yes, they are naturally very much inclined to do so. We try to supervise, though that is our weak spot at present; it is so difficult because the places are so small. What I thought of doing was to place one nurse as a supervisor on each line and see what she can do, to begin with.

A-840. For a labour force where women are employed you would, of course, prefer to use Indian *dais* under the supervision of a society like your own, or under the Indian Red Cross, rather than Europeans?—Yes, the Europeans are not so useful to the women as they would not be willing, or able, to do all that an ordinary *dai* would.

A-841. Is there such a thing in Karachi as the Maternity Benefit Act?—Yes. I find that very few people know about it.

A-842. Do the firms, and the workers especially, know about the terms of this Act?—No, they do not know anything about it.

A-843. How do you suggest knowledge of the Act might be spread?—The bone factory here gave me particulars. I think each Government should give a notice to every factory that the Act must be exhibited in writing in the language which is used by the people and made known in that way.

A-844. But so few of the work-people can read?—There are nearly always one or two men who can read. Of course, that would not do in the districts.

A-845. Some of the men may be able to read, but would women report their pregnancy to supervisors of the male sex?—No, that is just the difficulty.

A-846. Where women are employed you would have women supervisors?—Yes.

A-847. In order to explain the Act to the women workers?—Yes.

A-848. And also to give them the benefit provided?—Yes.

A-849. On the question of dietary, you say that *bajra* is the cheapest grain. Is it physiologically a satisfactory food?—Yes. Nearly everywhere it is *bajra*. In one case I found that fish was added.

A-850. In this district do you find what are known as diseases of malnutrition among women workers?—No, not nearly so much as in most places. We put that down to the effect of the sun.

A-851. Are you acquainted with that form of anæmia of pregnancy which is so common in Bombay?—There is a great deal of it here, but I think it is more common amongst the better class because they sit in the houses more.

A-852. You have not seen very many cases?—I have seen a good many.

A-853. You describe a case of anæmia in your memorandum?—Yes, that was an unfortunate school teacher.

A-854. I have myself noticed, and I think perhaps you will agree, that there are a large number of cases of ophthalmia among children in Karachi. Do you attribute that to any defect in nutrition, or is it largely infectious in nature?—I think a good deal of it is due to infection from one to another. My experience is that the children's eyes are very bad.

A-855. If the food of the people is so good, why is it that the infantile mortality is so high, because if the physiological intake is correct, infantile mortality should be lowered?—It is due to bad feeding due to ignorance; they give the children all sorts of things to eat. The other day we went into a house where there were four babies under 12 months old, all of whom were ill. All four were being wrongly fed: one was eating gram, and another dates. The women were astonished when we told them that the wrong feeding was the cause of their children's illness.

A-856. It is a matter of education?—Yes.

A-857. You would, of course, be in favour of the development of general welfare work amongst workers?—Yes, very much; it is very badly needed.

A-858. The provision of crèches, for instance?—Yes. I have seen crèches in two factories, one here and one in Hyderabad; that is all I have seen.

A-859. They are not very good?—No, they are not.

A-860. Would you be glad to have the help of trained welfare workers?—I should very much. It is really only a question of money.

A-861. You would be glad to get Indian women welfare workers?—Yes, it would have to be Indian women I think.

A-862. Do you think Indian women would be capable of doing welfare work?—Yes, I think so, if they were trained.

A-863. Where would you train them?—There is a training school in Delhi which is very good.

A-864. Do you think that that training school would be sufficient to train welfare workers for the whole of India?—More or less I think. I think it would be a good thing to send superior women to be trained at Delhi, who would afterwards return to their homes.

A-865. Would it be possible to use young women?—No.

A-865a. Do you care to say why?—So many of these things are managed by men and the women resent that very much; nice women will not work under men under the present circumstances.

A-866. If ante-natal clinics and baby clinics were provided, you think the women would use them if there were women welfare workers?—Yes.

A-867. The women welfare workers must be Indian you think?—I think so decidedly.

A-868. In your written memorandum you say that maternity benefit is much needed?—Yes.

A-869. Can you suggest any method by which it might be arranged and administered?—I am very much in favour of starting a maternity benefit fund, but it is difficult. We are trying our best to start it. There is a provident fund in Hyderabad which is very flourishing, but it is only for Hindus, and they will not take up maternity; I do not know why. I have begged them many times to add maternity benefit.

A-870. They will not do so?—No, at present they only deal with deaths and marriages. We must have maternity benefit and we are trying to think out some scheme.

A-871. In your memorandum you say: "A free trained midwife has been put on by the Hyderabad Municipality but the people do not patronize her". Can you tell me why?—Because she is an outsider.

A-872. You mean she does not belong to the district?—Yes, she is a *Sindhi* but she is an outsider and the other *dais* are against her.

A-873. Do you still think Delhi could train enough women for the whole of India?—No, I think the best thing is to train from your own centre if you can.

A-874. You say that you see much suffering among women and children. Do you notice that among the labour force or in the general population?—Generally. Even if there is something wrong the women never think of getting advice.

A-875. If a woman is suffering so much she will not be able to work in a labour force?—As I have said in my memorandum, one woman was actually teaching from her bed. They will not give in; that is why it is so pathetic.

A-876. What I mean by labour force is those who are required to do hard work in factories?—Generally one doctor is attached to each factory, and the labour women go and see the doctor, but where they cannot see him they suffer so much.

A-877. You emphasize the point again in your additional note that women very much resent being under the direct control of men?—Yes they do, but it is impossible to help it at present because we are so short of women workers.

A-878. If you were provided with women welfare workers would that solve the difficulty as far as you are concerned?—To a great extent it would. Of course our difficulty is want of roads. If we get good roads it would be very easy to do a great deal more.

A-879. You say that education will help labour to find its feet. Do you mean that general education should be given or should it be more or less vocational

education?—General education, because at present they do not know what they suffer from.

A-880. *Diwan Ghaman Lall* : The Maternity Benefits Act of Bombay provides that a woman is to give notice before she is eligible for benefits?—She must work for six or seven months before she can claim the benefit.

A-881. Yes, before she gives notice. Is there anything to prevent an employer from dismissing her and thus get out of giving her the benefits?—I suppose if they did once or twice some would make out a cry about it; but I do not think that would be done.

A-882. Do you not think it would be better to have a provision preventing him from taking that step, because there is a provision preventing him from dismissing afterwards?—Certainly it would be better.

A-883. Would you be in favour of extending the Maternity Benefits Act to the whole of India?—If possible, it is better to have a general Act.

A-884. Do you think that the allowance allowed under the Act, namely, eight annas, is sufficient?—I think it is sufficient, but if it could be raised to annas 10 or 12 it would be better.

A-885. She does not get her wages for the period?—No. But the allowance is equal to her wages in many cases.

A-886. You would be in favour of a better allowance?—Yes.

A-887. *Mr. Clow* : Do you think there is any danger that the Act may have the effect of causing employers to substitute male for female employees?—I do not think so, because in several factories I have visited they are very anxious to get women. For instance, in the bone factory at Hyderabad, there is a nurse who visits once a week; and in all the factories I visited I found that they stop their work for about half an hour so that we could lecture to the women.

A-888. *Miss Power* : Were you able to see any of the Factory Inspector's Reports in order to find out how frequently these factories were inspected?—I did read some of the reports, but the ones I saw were rather contradictory.

A-889. How were they contradictory?—One seemed to say there had been no accident, while another said the working conditions were injurious to health, but he did not say on what ground he based that opinion.

A-890. Did you question the employer at all as to whether there had been any alteration made in conditions between the two reports made by the Factory Inspectors?—No, I did not; I did not think of that. It would be no use asking them; they would not know; that is all confidential in the office.

A-891. Did you yourself see any conditions in the factories, or find out anything from the women when questioning them, which made it appear that the Factory Acts were not being complied with?—They seemed to be complied with everywhere; but the people outside said they worked the children morning and night, and if an official or anybody else went suddenly early in the morning or late at night, they would find children working; but the employers all assured me that no women were on the premises after 7 o'clock in the evening.

A-892. Is the difficulty that the inspector cannot arrive unknown to the employer?—They are supposed to, but they cannot, because they are seen getting off the train.

A-893. Do you think things are put right in advance of the Inspector's visit and he does not see things in their normal condition?—I suppose to a certain extent that would be so, if they knew he was coming. It is very difficult to keep it quiet; when the Inspector gets off the train at the station everybody knows he is somebody new, they guess who he is and the news is taken to the factory. I know that is constantly done.

A-894. You think children are being illegally employed and are removed before the Inspector arrives?—That is what my friends assured me. One said he had stated it in his paper but no notice was taken.

A-895. What paper was that; do you mean a daily paper?—A paper belonging to Mirpur Khas. He was very keen on it, but I did not ask him specially about it because I have had so little time; I have really had only three weeks and that is a very short time in which to do Sind, especially as the roads have been so bad owing to the floods that it has been difficult to get about, and the trains have not been running. But I can get you a lot more information if you want it; I shall be touring now.

A-896. I think it would be useful if you would give the Commission some further information. I do a lot of propaganda, which is very useful ; at every place I visit. I leave papers.

(The witness withdrew.)

The Chairman : Before the Commission adjourns, I wish to say something. During our proceedings it has been evident that two persons, at least, wish to say something to us. It would be impossible to take evidence without some previous notice, because it is clearly the duty of the Chairman to see evidence before it is submitted. But we are most anxious that nobody should feel they have not been heard if they have anything to say to the Commission. So I propose now to adjourn the Commission, but I shall attend here on the verandah, and if those persons wish to say anything about labour questions in Karachi, I personally, and I know many of my colleagues, will be glad to hear for a few minutes anything they have to say to us.

(The Commission adjourned to Sukkur.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

SECOND MEETING

SUKKUR

Friday, 18th October 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI,
C.H., P.C.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
(*Medical Assessor*).

Mrs. HOMAI, F. J. KARAKA.
Mrs. HARDEVIBAI A. MASAND. } *Lady Assessors.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN. } *Joint Secretaries.*

**Mr. C. S. C. HARRISON, C.I.E., I.S.E., Chief Engineer, Lloyd
Barrage and Canals Construction.**

A-897. *Mr. Cliff* : In your memorandum you express a doubt that corruption would become rampant in public employment agencies ?—There is plenty of corruption now—that is, in the lower paid staff. If you were able to have highly paid staff and specially selected men to carry out the work, you would get rid of corruption.

A-898. If you get the right type of character in employment agencies would you obviate corruption ?—If you could afford the price.

A-899. Is there the same kind of corruption amongst the contractors ?—Yes, just as much.

A-900. You heard the evidence given at Karachi, that there was a large number of unemployed and that they did not know there was employment available here. Do you think that a public employment agency, with a record of unemployed, would be of any use ?—It is difficult to say. I should not think it would be of any particular use. To-day I was told by one of my staff that a contractor had sent down some of his men to Karachi to try and get people about a month ago, and he was not able to get more than a few.

A-901. Is there a proper legal contract between the Government and the contractor ?—Yes.

A-902. In all cases ?—Not in all cases. We have two forms—the *pucca* and *kucha*. The former is a binding contract, a form called F.2. That is drawn up by the Legal Department, and it is legally binding on both sides. There is a time limit, and there is a fixed rate, and there are all sorts of clauses in it. Then there is the *kucha* contract, which is called K.2. In that we simply agree with the contractor at a rate. There is no question of how much he has got to do, or the time in which he has to do it. He can give us 24 hours' notice to stop the work, and we can give him 24 hours' notice.

A-903. Is the pay in that contract time-rate for the actual work done ?—No, we pay on quantity.

A-904. Can you give me any indication of the range of values of that class of contracts ?—I constructed a dam in the Bombay Deccan for 35 lakhs of rupees.

I did the whole thing on a *kucha* contract. In Sind we give up to Rs. 50,000 on a *kucha* contract. No deposit is taken. That helps the small contractors very much indeed, because on the legal binding form big contractors have to pay a heavy deposit; whereas the man on the K.2 form does not pay any deposit at all; it is merely piece-work.

A-905. Does the Government, in placing a scheme of this character and having to deal with contract labour, make any provision at all to shelter the contract labour?—No, there is no clause for shelter.

A-906. If the Government were taking a corps of engineers—soldiers—to do this work they would naturally provide an advance party to make provision for shelter and sanitation?—It depends. We have had work done by troops. We have given out an actual contract. They were our contractors. It was the Third Pioneers, The Bombay Sapper and Miners. They had to make all their own housing arrangements.

A-907. But the soldiers, as soldiers, would make the necessary provisions?—Yes. If you take their Commanding Officer as the contractor, he makes provision for their housing.

A-908. Does it not strike you that in a scheme of that character some provision for shelter ought to be made?—Yes. It is an ideal to be aimed at, but it is all a question of cost. Someone has to pay for that in the end. The State has to pay for it.

A-909. It comes in on the over-all cost of the scheme?—Exactly.

A-910. The consumer pays?—No, the taxpayer pays.

A-911. The same view apparently was taken many years ago at home. Now where contract labour has to be employed there is provision for shelter, for sanitation, for water, and so on. I was wondering whether in your experience you do not think it necessary and desirable that some similar provision should be made here?—I think it would be practicable on concentrated works; but it is a very large order to attempt to house people when they are moving from spot to spot.

A-912. Has there been anything of this nature done on concentrated works?—Yes. The contractors put up huts. If you were here in November and December you would see a tremendous number of huts put up by the contractors. The contract for these particular works has not been given out yet, so that the only hutting you have seen here is Government hutting.

A-913. Do they also make provision for a medical service?—No; we give all that here on the concentrated work.

A-914. How does a man employed on contract work avail himself of the medical service and the hospital here?—He goes straight to the hospital in the morning to the out-patient department. If he is very ill he goes straight into hospital. If he is an out-patient he lines up; gets his treatment, and goes back to his hut.

A-915. If he is unable to do that, what happens?—His relations must bring him. We have had many cases of that.

A-916. Generally on these large schemes there is no medical provision made?—On the scattered works, no. On the concentrated works, yes. All the camps are inspected by the medical officer and his staff. We have 15 doctors dotted over 13,000 square miles.

A-917. If there is an inspection, and something wrong is found, what happens?—The man is either advised to go into the hospital, or he is treated on the spot. We have only the one hospital for the whole of this work. If men are sick 150 miles away from here we try to get them to go to the nearest local dispensary.

A-918. Is it unfair to say that, generally speaking, little provision, if any, is made by the Government for cases of this character—for housing and protecting the people?—I say that on concentrated works we make a very successful attempt—in Sukkur itself; but on the scattered works it is simply impossible to do so. Our field medical units pay visits to all the people on the works, and in all cases of accidents the people are immediately taken in to the hospital. We see to that.

A-919. Take the place which we visited this afternoon: can you instance to me any provision for shelter which has been made for those people, outside of themselves?—No.

A-920. Is that a concentrated work?—No. Those people may be moved next week half a mile away.

A-921. That is the kind of labour for which there is no protection?—No.

A-922. With regard to the wages paid for that class of labour, would it be feasible to make provision that they should receive the rates to which they are entitled?—It

would be very nice to be able to do so, but I do not see how you could bring it into operation.

A-923. It ought to be done but it is very hard to do it?—Yes, it would be an ideal to be aimed at.

A-924. Dealing with seasonal labour, you say “A large percentage of labour employed on this work being seasonal it follows that the extent of return to villages is in general 5 months in the year, and this annually.” In another place you say “There are no good grounds for any unemployment in Sind,” and then you state the amount of work available. I am a little at sea with regard to those two statements. I cannot reconcile them. What is the meaning of “seasonal”?—It is agricultural labour. We are quite prepared to keep them on for the whole 300 days of the year.

A-925. You cannot get them to stay?—No.

A-926. You say “The cause of migration appears to be due to ordinary seeking after continuous employment.” Is that a search for security?—I should say so.

A-927. Dealing with workmen's compensation and men receiving compensation under contractors, are there any records kept of the compensation cases paid by contractors?—No.

A-928. I learn that there are records kept for other purposes. For instance, you keep a record of the contracts between yourselves and the contractor, and particulars of those contracts are sent to the Income Tax authorities. Would it not be possible in the same way to keep a record of the payments paid by the contractors under workmen's compensation?—It would be possible.

A-929. Do you think it wise to do that?—Yes, I think it would be quite good. It would give us an idea as to how the Act was working under the contractors' orbit.

A-930. With regard to inspection, is there any medical officer, or Factory Inspector, apart from the Barrage scheme, who visits this scheme?—The Factory Inspector visits it—that part of it which comes under the Factory Act: that is to say, the stone-dressing shed, the drag-line workshop and the electrical workshop.

A-931. Are there any officers comparable to Medical Officers of Health who visit the whole scheme?—Yes. Apart from our own establishment, we get the Director of Public Health from Bombay. He pays an annual visit. Then we have the Assistant Director of Public Health for Sind for two or three visits in the year, and we invite his suggestions. He is resident in Karachi.

A-932. Can you say what suggestions have been put up by either of those Medical Officers of Health?—They suggest remedies for any little defects. One of them made a suggestion last year that the bins in the township should be plastered at the bottom—one or two little things like that. We work on the general lines of the pamphlet issued by the Public Health Department, so that there would only be one or two little defects which they might bring to our notice.

A-933. You say the usual kind of defects, and you illustrate it with regard to plastering bins and so on; may I take that to be a fairly good illustration?—Yes.

A-934. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Why were no wage statistics incorporated in your memorandum?—They are not in the memorandum, but I can supply information if it is required; I can give you the rates of pay.

A-935. Will you oblige me by giving a comprehensive statement of wages paid to various classes of workers?—Yes, I can give you that.

A-936. May I also trouble you for a statement regarding the hours of work of various classes of workers on the works?—Yes, I will supply that to the Secretary.

A-937. Should I be correct in stating that the average minimum wage of the workers on the earth works is about Rs. 20 a month?—That is about it, yes.

A-938. I do not know whether you have got among your papers a statement that was supplied to me this morning as to the diet supplied in your hospital for sick people?—I have not got it here; we have got it on our files.

A-939. I will read it out to you. There are two important points in it. The full diet costs 4 as. 6 p. per head per diem?—Yes.

A-940. That does not include milk and sugar?—Yes.

A-941. But if you add milk and sugar and 1 lb. of rice to this diet, which consists of flour, wheat, rice, ghee, dal, vegetable, curry stuff, salt and firewood, the cost would be about 6 as. 6 p.?—Yes.

A-942. That is for the patient in the hospital?—Yes.

A-943. Should I be right in saying that an ordinary worker doing a full day's hard work may require a little more ?—He might require it, but I do not think he gets it.

A-944. He does not get it ?—He does not get it ; that is the point. I should think he would require it, yes.

A-945. If I take the workers' family unit to be 5, should I be right ?—I think that is a pretty high average figure.

A-946. I am taking the general Indian figure ?—I should say that was high.

A-947. What would you put it at ?—I should put it at 4, not more.

A-948. If I put it at 4, and I multiply 6 as. 6 p. by 4, I get a figure of 26 as. ?—Yes.

A-949. Am I right then, in considering that the average worker who gets Rs. 20 a month, is not getting sufficient ?—No, you have drawn some false premises there. Our work-people on this work are mostly agricultural labour and they do not pay the same rates as we pay ; they are probably paying half the rates that we pay for the food in the hospitals ; for instance, they will get their milk free.

A-950. I am taking the workers on your works ; I am not taking the workers when they get back to the villages. On the works you agree with me that they would not get their milk free ?—Yes.

A-951. Nor would they get any other article of food free ?—No, you are right.

A-952. And, bazaar facilities not being very adequate, they would have to pay fairly well for all the supplies that they got ?—Yes.

A-953. If I put it in that way, if they want the same sort of food that you would supply to a patient, then at 4 to a family, it would work out at about Rs. 1-10-0 ?—Yes.

A-954. Should I be correct in my estimate ?—As an ideal I think that would be a very good figure to try to arrive at, but as a study in economics there is the other side of the question, that if we aim at that high ideal in what I call income, that is to say, feeding the man and trying to get him that wage, there must be the other ideal of increased output, or else the country is going to suffer.

A-955. I will come to that point a little later. All I wanted you to tell me was whether you agree with me or not that the minimum figure according to your own statistics should be that ?—Yes. That is on the assumption that none of the other members of his family do any work, which only applies in a Mahommedan country ; it does not apply in a Hindu country.

A-956. Sind is a Mahommedan country ?—Yes, 70 per cent. Mahommedan.

A-957. In your memorandum you say : " No appreciable improvement in the efficiency of workers on the class of work dealt with by this Scheme has been noticed in recent years. Generally speaking, the efficiency of the labourer is as it was 25 years ago." First of all, have you any standard by which you go in regard to efficiency ?—Yes.

A-958. What exactly do you mean by efficiency ?—It is on the question of costs.

A-959. Would you explain it to me ?—If a man's rate of wage is going to be increased and his efficiency also increases, then you will get a more or less equal rate. But the rates have gone up enormously ; that is to say, the man's wage has gone up three times and the rates have gone up three times, which shows there is no increase in efficiency on the part of the man.

A-960. Let me be perfectly clear. Let us take a man who works say 8 hours a day and digs up say 100 cubic feet, taking a hypothetical figure. If he did that 25 years ago, do you think, if he is doing manual work, he is likely to do more to-day ?—Yes. Why not ?

A-961. On what basis ?—If he wants to earn more, why should not he. My point is that if you want to increase his wage, he must be prepared to do a bit more work.

A-962. What I am putting to you is this : given the same machinery, given the same strength, given the same number of working hours, would he be capable of producing more in cubic feet than he did 25 years ago ?—Why should not he ? The world is always aiming at increasing efficiency. If you are going to assume that he was doing his maximum amount of work 25 years ago, then there can be no increase.

A-963. Supposing a man did his maximum amount of work 25 years ago ?—I am not prepared to suppose that at all, because it is not so. That is my opinion as an engineer.

A-964. Let me put it to you in another way. There is a limit to the amount of work that a man can do ?—Yes.

A-965. The amount of earth that he can dig ?—Yes.

A-966. Supposing he got to that point 25 years ago, obviously he cannot go any further ?—Obviously.

A-967. Therefore there is a limit in regard to purely manual work ?—Quite so.

A-968. And that limit constitutes a bar to any increase based on the question of efficiency ?—If he has reached that limit of efficiency previously, then of course there is no question of increase.

A-969. What are the other factors that you consider necessary in the matter of efficiency ?—In my written memorandum I have mentioned one very important one: pride in his work, which is a common trait in Europe. I am trying to compare him with a superior type of workman. In Europe you can leave a gang of workmen not only to produce output but quality combined with output. It is impossible to leave a gang of labour in this country without supervision if you want quality. To me, as an employer of labour, quantity is not the only thing.

A-970. I am taking the manual labourer doing earth work. What is the average that your manual worker digs out in the course of the day ?—It varies according to the man.

A-971. I am taking the average ?—It is so difficult to take an average, because the Pathan will do $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much work as a man from the United Provinces, for instance.

A-972. Is that because the Pathan is physically stronger ?—Yes.

A-973. To increase a man's efficiency would you agree with me that the first consideration is that he must have good food ?—Exactly.

A-974. The second consideration is that he must have a decent house to live in ?—Not necessarily ; we meet some people to-day who would not live in such a house if you built it for them.

A-975. But would you agree with me generally that it would increase a man's efficiency ?—Yes, to give a man a good house and good pay.

A-976. Would you also agree with me that if he were free from the ordinary worries which are connected with the money-lender's demands upon him, it would possibly increase his efficiency ?—Yes, certainly.

A-977. That is to say if you gave your labour force good food, good houses and good clothes, you would thereby increase its efficiency ?—I should think so, yes.

A-978. What has been done during recent years to increase the efficiency of labour ? Let us take the points one by one. What has been done with regard to housing to increase the efficiency of the general class of worker that you have here ?—Do you mean in his home or on the work ?

A-979. In his home ?—Nothing.

A-980. During the last three years that you have been here, has there been a rise in wages ?—No ; I should say there has been a slight fall in wages due to the presence of these machines.

A-981. During the last few years has anything been done for the education of these workers or their children ?—Not by me. There is a free school in the township, but not on the works ; that is quite impracticable.

A-982. Then would you agree with me generally that many of the factors which would ensure greater efficiency have been lacking ?—Quite so, yes.

A-983. With regard to migration, you say in your memorandum that it is economic pressure that brings your workers here ?—Yes.

A-984. So I take it that the conditions in the places from which they come must be worse than conditions here ?—Yes, I should say so.

A-985. You also say there is a great deal of going back to the villages ?—Yes.

A-986. But nevertheless you state that 40 to 50 per cent. of these workers do not go back ?—Yes ; that is of the local Sindhi labour.

A-987. You say that of the labour employed in the Rohri Canal Circle 50 per cent. remains ; of the Right Bank Area labour approximately 40 per cent. remains ; of the Eastern Nara Tract approximately 45 per cent. remains ?—Yes.

A-988. Are there any other areas apart from those areas ?—No, that is the general area.

A-989. So that I take it that roughly about 50 per cent. of labour does remain permanently ?—Yes ; but by remaining permanently I do not mean that they do not go back to their villages for visits ; they will remain on the works, but they go back to their homes for a fortnight or three weeks.

A-990. You say : " Eastern Nara Tract. Approximately 45 per cent. of the labour force in this area works continuously on the canals throughout the year " ?—Yes, that is right.

A-991. " Right Bank Area. Approximately 40 per cent. of the labour force in this area works continuously on the canals throughout the year " ?—Yes, that is right.

A-992. " Left Bank Area. Some 50 per cent. of the labour employed in the Rohri Canal Circle remains on our works throughout the 12 months of a year." So that if they go back, they go back probably just for a short while ?—That is right.

A-993. Would I be putting it too high if I suggested with regard to the other half of labour that goes back for 4 or 5 months, that if they had better conditions of life and labour here, better wages, it would induce them not to return to their homes and you would also have them here as permanent residents ?—No, not necessarily, because if they are truly agricultural they always want to go back to their homes. That is why I specially mention the Eastern Nara Tract where we have the " Tharis." They are extremely poverty stricken, and yet those men go back to their villages. If they hear of a drop of rain falling in their country, they run back to it and sow their crops, though there is only a 50 per cent. chance of those crops ever being reaped ; they are prepared to leave their work for that chance.

A-994. What number would that 50 per cent. represent ? Is this taken on the basis of 30,000 workers or 19,000 ?—I take it on the 19,000 basis, but you can take it on the average if you like.

A-995. That is roughly about 25,000 ?—Yes.

A-996. So that any permanent schemes for their benefit would be feasible, because they are permanently here ?—Yes, so long as the works are in progress.

A-997. For instance, if a scheme such as sickness insurance were provided for those workers, it would be feasible ?—No, it would not be feasible. That is the one thing I have tried to think of. You cannot have sickness insurance, in my opinion, in a country which is subject to epidemics as countries in the East are. If you have got your medical and sanitary organization at such high efficiency as to preclude the possibility of epidemics then I should say sickness benefits would be practicable. In the East you cannot do it as an economic proposition. As a completely philanthropic proposition it can be done, but as an economic proposition worked on any lines by the State it would be impossible.

A-998. I am glad you have thrown some light on that ; but first of all, let me dispose of these works. Have you had any epidemics during the last three years ?—Yes.

A-999. Serious ones ?—Yes, cholera, small-pox, and we get the usual malaria each year ; October is a malarious month.

A-1000. Supposing a system were introduced of panel doctors who would be paid so much and whose services would be available, epidemic or no epidemic ; would you object to it ?—I would welcome the system if it were economically sound ; my opinion is that it is economically impossible. It is an ideal at which we should aim.

A-1001. You remember recently there was an amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—Yes.

A-1002. And opinions were invited ?—Yes.

A-1003. Did you offer any opinion ?—Yes ; I have promised to give you a copy of my opinion.

A-1004. The point was raised in the Assembly that the Workmen's Compensation Act should be applicable to canals and open works ?—Yes.

A-1005. Are you in favour of that ?—Not at present. I said I did not believe in rushing headlong into increasing legislation and so on, until we have had some experience. I recommended that the present Act should remain in force as it is for 5 years, and then we might review the situation. The Act, I think, has only been in force 3 years.

A-1006. *Mr. Clow* : Five years.—Then they can review the situation.

A-1007. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What experience could you gain of the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act in relation to open works and canals ?—All these things go back to the question of finance, whether such proposals are economically sound or not. The ideal is admitted by everybody. I have to look at it from the economic point of view. As I have said, I have done it voluntarily, and we shall get valuable information as to what the costs are. If we are to increase the scope, we must estimate

what the increased cost will be. Can works economically bear that increased cost? If they can, then I say I am entirely in favour of extending the Act.

A-1008. But, apart from the economic difficulty, you are generally in agreement that the benefits of that Act should be extended to these works?—As a blind ideal, yes; but I have to look at all my ideals from the economic point of view.

A-1009. You would not look at it from this point of view, for instance, that a man who serves you and in the course of his employment suffers an injury deserves to receive some benefit from you because he is jeopardising his life or limbs?—He is not necessarily jeopardising his life or limbs.

A-1010. But that is shown by the very fact that he suffers an injury in the course of his employment?—No. The present Act has brought under its scope the classes of work that contribute to accidents. Beyond these further cases of accidents are extremely rare. It may be said that because they are extremely rare the liability is all the smaller, and therefore why not bring them in? But the trouble will be to see that the machinery works. Our difficulty, as one of the Members of the Commission has pointed out, is to find out whether people who are not of high moral standard, e.g., the ordinary small contractor, are paying this compensation.

A-1011. Then that is another practical difficulty that you point out?—Yes.

A-1012. But, apart from that, you would agree?—Quite so; my agreement is evident from my action in accepting a voluntary liability.

A-1013. You made a statement at Karachi which I am sure you did not mean in the sense in which I first took it. In reply to some question you said the only thing you were interested in was the increase in the number of workers. I suppose you are also interested in securing better conditions for the workers?—I do not remember that particular statement, and I want to know the context in which it was used.

A-1014. I take it you would be interested in the conditions of life of the workers?—Oh, naturally.

A-1015. Is there any organization of workers here on the canals?—Not that I know.

A-1016. You would not be averse to an organization being set up?—No, not if it were properly run.

A-1017. Is the system of payments here usually weekly?—Yes.

A-1018. And it works satisfactorily?—No, not entirely. I personally am of opinion that if we could pay every fortnight the people would be better off, because on every transaction the *bania* will try to make something. The more the transactions the more the worker will be robbed. The less the number of payments, the less chance of the *bania* robbing the men.

A-1019. Would not more frequent payments reduce the incidence of interest charges?—No, I do not think it would in the slightest.

A-1020. If I owe a *bania* Rs. 10, if I pay him back Rs. 2 this week, naturally the interest has not to be paid on that Rs. 2 next week?—But the nature of the person is such that he has already borrowed another Rs. 2 after paying back that Rs. 2. My enquiries lead me to believe that the people are continuously in debt.

A-1021. To-day I found one or two workers who told me they were working from 6 in the morning until 6 in the evening?—I would not believe that.

A-1022. There were other workers who said they were working from 6 in the morning until 6 in the evening with a 3 hours break?—If a Pathan said that, yes, but I never attempt to go out and inspect my works at 8 o'clock in the morning because I never see anyone on the works at that hour. I make an exception of the Pathan, who will even work on moonlight nights, because he is not on daily wages and he is out to get all the money he can; he will work until he drops. I cannot accept the statement you make.

A-1023. I would like you to look into that matter and let us have a statement about that?—Yes, I shall be pleased to have an observation made as to exactly at what hours they do turn out.

A-1024. There are other workers who work for 8 hours at a stretch, from mid-night to 8 in the morning?—Yes.

A-1025. Would it not be possible to give them some sort of rest, a break?—Yes, if they would like to have it.

A-1026. Is any place provided for them where they can take this rest? I am merely drawing your attention to a grievance which I think is there, because I saw yesterday several of them coming early and lying down on the cement blocks?—Yes.

A-1027. Large numbers of them ?—Yes, that is their usual habit.

A-1028. Would it not be better to provide some sort of shelter at their places of work where they could take their rest ?—I do not think they would use it, unless it was very elaborate ; then they would have to be trained to it.

A-1029. Is there a fair wages clause in your contracts ?—No.

A-1030. Would it be desirable to have a fair wages clause ?—If practicable : yes, it could be looked into.

A-1031. In your memorandum you say : “ I consider that the general effect of contractors as intermediaries is satisfactory ”, while lower down you say : “ The result is unsatisfactory because we have one set of wits working against another set ” ?—Yes ; that is dealing specifically with the abolition of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act.

A-1032. The Workmen's Breach of Contract Act having been abolished, you are of opinion that the present arrangement of getting workers through the intermediaries is unsatisfactory ?—No, I do not. I am giving you the point of view of the employer.

A-1033. Looking at the fight that is going on between the worker on the one side and the contractor on the other ?—Yes.

A-1034. You have come to the conclusion that after the withdrawal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act the position is not satisfactory ?—As regards payments. That really does not affect the efficiency of our works.

A-1035. I am not considering efficiency ; I am only considering whether the conditions are satisfactory or not ?—Yes.

A-1036. Could you oblige me by getting somebody in the office to work out a statement giving the cost of labour and comparing it with overhead charges ?—Yes, I have already promised to give that per 1,000 cubic feet of work. I am having that made out.

A-1037. Is there any security of tenure for any one of these workers on the canals ? Can a man be dismissed at a moment's notice ?—Yes.

A-1038. Is there any security ?—There is no legal security at all ; there is just the practical security.

A-1039. *Mr. Joshi* : You said the cost of housing these workers would fall upon the works. Does not the cost of housing the officers and others fall upon the works ?—No, they pay ; the officers pay on a 6 per cent. basis.

A-1040. Have you worked out the figures ?—Yes. It so happens that on this particular scheme, during the period of construction, to try and get officers to remain on the scheme, we have let them have their houses rent-free ; but ordinarily, on all other construction works they have to pay the usual Government rent limited to 10 per cent. of their pay limited to 6 per cent. of the cost of construction of the building.

A-1041. On your works this question of whether the cost falls upon the works or not was not considered so far as the officers were concerned ?—Yes, it was all worked out what the cost would be.

A-1042. The cost does fall upon the works so far as your officers are concerned ?—Yes.

A-1043. You think it is only the cost of housing the labourers which should not fall upon the works ?—No, I did not say that ; I said it was a question of economics.

A-1044. How do you decide that the cost of housing the officers is economic, while the cost of housing the labourers is not economic ?—Your officer is a specialized person. If you are going constantly to change the managing director of a company, that company is more than likely to go smash ; but if you change the lower paid clerks in the office that does not necessarily affect in the slightest degree the prosperity of the company. In this particular case you have to concentrate on keeping the type of officer, professional and otherwise, that you require here on the works ; for that reason I recommended to Government that we should give him some concession above his ordinary pay to keep him here. I should not give it to him where the climate is not against him.

A-1045. The only thing I do not understand is this. You appreciate the necessity of having good officers, and you think if they remain here permanently you will get a better quality of work ?—No, it increases the efficiency of the works.

A-1046. You complain that the labourers do not take pride in their work, that they do not give that quality of work that is given by better paid workers in Europe and other places ?—It is not a complaint ; I do not complain at all ; it is merely a statement.

A-1047. Is it not possible that if you housed these people as you house your officers and if they remained here permanently, they might show a better quality of work and take pride in their work ?—I have already answered *Mr. Chaman Lal* on that

point and said: Yes, house them better, feed them better, and you will get higher efficiency.

A-1048. Do you not think the employer should begin first to make an experiment of treating the labourers better and then expect a better quality of work, instead of expecting the worker to show a better quality of work; and then begin to pay him more?—I quite agree, but I would put it on the 50-50 basis, if possible.

A-1049. Have you made an experiment of taking say 500 workers, paying them a little more, housing them better, treating them better in every way, and did you find by experiment that workers treated in that way did not give a better quality of work?—No, I have not done that; that would be a rather interesting experiment.

A-1050. If you had made that experiment you might have had interesting results?—Yes, I might have had.

A-1050a. You think that experiment will be interesting?—Yes.

A-1051. You say that sickness insurance and workmen's compensation are economic questions. I agree with you. But you state that you will have workmen's compensation when it becomes economic?—Yes.

A-1052. Supposing you provide sickness insurance and workmen's compensation, do you not think that would enable you to get better results and greater efficiency?—You are aiming at the ideal. You are asking me what I think of an ideal. I agree with you that as an ideal it would be an excellent thing. But as a practical man I cannot simply look at an ideal; I have to look at the practical combination of that ideal with the facts.

A-1053. I am not asking you to look at any ideal; I am asking you to make an experiment of giving sickness insurance and workmen's compensation and seeing what is the result?—At whose cost is the experiment to be made? It comes back to economics again. I agree in principle. It is all a question of the practical side of it.

A-1054. Then I will not pursue that further. You said that as 5 years have passed, you are in favour of extending the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Yes, as soon as the 5 years experience has been reviewed.

A-1055. Why should you not, who are in charge of labour, take the initiative of suggesting to Government that such a thing should be done, instead of waiting for others to ask you whether it should be done or not?—Again the issue is confused. It is very easy for me to set up ideals and to suggest to Government that such things should be done, because I am paying with the taxpayer's money. I have to consider what the result of my action will be on the man who has to pay out of his own pocket.

A-1056. You have agreed to the principle that if the labourer is treated better his efficiency will increase. Is it not the duty, then, of a good employer to see from time to time what are the difficulties from which his labourers suffer?—Exactly.

A-1057. If he finds that workmen's compensation is a benefit should he not suggest to the Government that such a law should be passed?—If he can afford it.

A-1058. My point is this. As a large employer you do not find time to deal with these questions. You have no people to look after the welfare of your labour?—We have no welfare staff at all.

A-1059. Do you not think some such suggestion might be made by you?—I could make the suggestion. The question is, is it practicable to carry it out? The economic point comes in.

A-1060. You say that if you engaged a man to make suggestions about the welfare of your workers it would not be an economic proposition?—Not if there is any hope of carrying out his suggestions. I am in the position myself to make a hundred suggestions for the betterment of the people. The question is whether I can make any practical suggestions on economic grounds. I do not think, in scattered works of this nature, it would serve any useful purpose to have a welfare officer specially for the job.

A-1061. You stated that in the case of some of your labourers their economic position is better because their women and children work. Do you not think their women and children work because their wages are low?—Not necessarily. The Mohammedan workman's wife does not work because her husband's wage is low.

A-1062. Ordinarily it may be true that if a man is in difficulty his women and children have to work?—Not amongst the Mohammedans.

A-1063. But among the Hindus?—Quite so.

A-1064. Is it proper that we should add the income of the wife and children?—We again get back to the law of economics.

A-1065. *Mr. Joshi* : You say you have a school in the town ?—A municipal school. We have given the buildings free.

A-1066. What class of people make use of that school ?—Every class. There are no sweepers.

A-1067. Are they labourers ?—No, the labourers do not go.

A-1068. You have stated that there is work enough here for people for 300 days in the year. Why do you say 300 and not 365 ?—Because I am allowing the 65 days for Sundays and holidays.

A-1069. You do not work on Sundays ?—We give them a rest day. Here it is Friday.

A-1070. You made a statement that the contractors have to pay an advance of 25 per cent. for the season. After the repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act did they not find difficulty in making those advances ?—Yes. The abolition of that Act has tended to make the contractors reduce the extent of their advances.

A-1071. They still make advances ?—Yes.

A-1072. They do not mind taking that risk ?—They pass it on to us in the higher rates.

A-1073. In certain areas you say you do not make any arrangements for water supply. Do you not think that is necessary ?—I have already said that where there is any question of difficulty of water supply we do make arrangements.

A-1074. You do not think that generally you should make the necessary arrangements for a pure water supply ?—The first thing a labourer asks when he goes to a spot is "Is there a good lot of water here," and they find out the best well and continue to use it. If they complain that there is not a good water supply we make arrangements to carry the water for them.

A-1075. For how many hours do your workshops work ?—Eight hours *plus* overtime. They can work up to 12 hours.

A-1076. Would you have any objection to the hours of work in the factories being reduced, by law, from the present figure ?—No, I am in favour of the shorter hours.

A-1077. *Mr. Clow* : You refer in your memorandum to the *Brohis* or *Brohins*. You state they have shown partiality for canal excavation directly under Government. Are they so employed here ?—Yes. We employ them in little groups. We make them their own piece-workers. When we first started we had rather big groups and we made one of their own party responsible for 8 or 10 families. We discovered he was just as bad as the outside contractor, so we stopped it and made little groups of 10 or 12 working together.

A-1078. They get no advances ?—No.

A-1079. Why is an advance necessary to bring in the ordinary worker ?—I have never been able to fathom why.

A-1080. You gave the other day an instance of what seemed to be a very large percentage of the rate you were paying being retained by the contractor ?—That was an exceptional case. That is why I quoted it.

A-1081. Taking a typical case, do you consider the amount retained by the contractor is reasonable or unreasonable, having regard to the risks and other elements involved ?—I think on the whole it is reasonable. If you review the situation, Sind is a country of contractors. I could name off-hand half a dozen men whom I would put in the category of wealthy. The rest of the men are small contractors, who get a living wage, and very little more.

A-1082. We have come across a fairly large proportion of men who have been here for several years. Are annual advances necessary in their case, or do they get only the one advance at the beginning ?—If they are working for one contractor they only get the one advance. If they move off to another contractor (he tries to entice them away) he is prepared to give them further advances.

A-1083. Is there much enticement of that sort ?—Yes. It is very severe. He will not pay them any more wages but he tempts them with advances.

A-1084. You say that the mechanical excavators 20 years ago could not compete with labour ; but now can do so. I take it you do not mean to suggest that labour has got less efficient, but that there is an improvement in the excavator ?—In this particular case the mechanical excavator has improved, but the ordinary locomotive has not. I could not afford to have locomotives 20 years ago because my labour was so cheap ; whereas now-a-days the locomotive is a cheaper proposition than labour.

A-1085. Can you remember what the rate was in this part of the world when you first came out for earthwork?—About Rs. 3-8-0 per 1,000 cubic feet. Similar work is now Rs. 6-8-0.

A-1086. So that allowing for the rise in the cost of living you would say that, on the whole, the worker is getting more—measured not by money but by what he can buy?—Yes.

A-1087. He is consuming more than he was?—Yes, and he is better clothed.

A-1088. As regards sickness insurance, do you think the workers would be willing to pay insurance premiums, suppose a scheme were devised?—I think it is highly improbable, without an advance of education.

A-1089. Regarding the weekly holiday, are we to understand that on Fridays no work is normally done here?—No. If we have to put on anybody to work on that day it is generally the mechanical staff, and they get overtime. The contractors' men do not work.

A-1090. Do your staff get a holiday?—No. Our staff do all their measuring up on that day. Our staff work the full week.

A-1091. Would they not do better work if they were only employed six days in the week?—They would probably. I am not prepared to experiment. Our full strain of work is for such a short season. I would not mind trying an experiment on a small work.

A-1092. *Colonel Russell* : I noticed, in going round the housing area, that you had the sewage from the cess-pits removed by carts. Would it not have been a more economical scheme to have laid down a sewerage plant right away?—It was a toss-up whether it would have been. When the decision was made it was a question whether we would be able to dispose of our township as a going concern, and I reckoned that the capital expenditure was not justified at the time.

A-1093. You will admit that it would have been much better from a health point of view?—Yes, not that I have anything to complain of about the health of the township. It has been extraordinarily good.

A-1094. Can you let us know the number of women employed direct on the works, and what percentage of women work under contractors?—I will try to find that out. It is a very small figure.

A-1095. You say that the medical facilities are readily availed of by such female workers as there are on the works. Do your female workers also take advantage of the hospitals during confinement?—No. We have not had a single case.

A-1096. In that case are there any trained *dais* or midwives on the work?—No.

A-1097. They are left to shift for themselves?—Yes, so far as we are concerned.

A-1098. There is no distinction made between the wives of the workers and the wives of those who are not workers?—No.

A-1099. The Bombay Maternity Act does not apply on the Sukkur Barrage?—No.

A-1100. You say that the Workmen's Compensation Act is not applicable to the bulk of the labour force on the scheme, but that a working scheme, by arrangement with the contractors, exists for compensating workmen?—Yes.

A-1101. When contractors have to pay compensation, does each case come up for scrutiny in a regular way?—No. I have no direct control over that. The Commissioner in charge of the Workmen's Compensation Act is the person who goes into all the details.

A-1102. None of the officers on the works have anything to do with that?—No. We have no right to examine a contractor's books.

A-1103. Would it be better to amend the law in that direction?—Yes, it would simplify things. It might mean an increase of work on the already over-burdened engineer.

A-1104. *Mr. Joshi* : Have you any idea as to what will happen to the labourers when your work is finished?—No. They will probably seek for other work, the same as workers are pouring in to us from the Sutlej Valley and the United Provinces. So, when they leave us, they will probably pour on to some other big public work.

A-1105. Do you not think that at such a time the need for a public employment agency is more felt?—I agree with a public employment agency in principle but not in practice. If you were able to get highly paid officers to run it, it might be successful. I would not leave the running of it to lowly paid people. You have got a sort of employment agency now in the form of the contractor and *jemadar*.

A-1106. Why do you say there will be greater corruption in a public employment agency than there is corruption to-day under the present system by the *jemadar*?—There is corruption. If it gets too high, the man loses his job, but it takes rather a long time for a Government petty official to lose his job. He has to be found out by Government. These other people are found out by the men.

A-1107. *The Chairman*: Referring to the question of the surplus of labour in Karachi, there is at present no agency for directing surplus labour in one area to another area where labour is required. Can you personally make such enquiries as are open to you in Karachi as to whether even a thousand or two men coming willingly to work under you to that extent would be a great benefit?—Yes, I will enquire into that.

A-1107a. With regard to the inspections which are made by the Director of Public Health in Bombay once a year and by the Assistant Director at Karachi, can you give us one or two specimens? Do they report in print?—They write to us officially.

A-1107b. Will you send us one or two specimens running over two years to see what kind of supervision they give?—Certainly. I will have that sent to you.

A-1108. You have been rather pressed to give personal opinions on what are semi-political questions. I do not yet quite understand whether the relationship of a public servant to his Government is different in this country from what it is in England, but we should never expect public servants to give opinions on matters of policy at home?—Here it does not matter I think. If we qualify our answers by saying: "Speaking personally", it does not matter. It is a difficult position, I admit.

The Chairman: I can appreciate your difficulty in giving personal opinions, because I suppose on one side or the other there might be complaints in these days of public assemblies.

A-1109. *Mr. Sastri*: There is a doubt left in my mind after what I have heard about Mohammedan labourers in this part of the world. You have said to-day that no Mohammedan woman works at all. Is that universal, or does it apply only to particular classes?—There are many low classes. One of the Members of the Commission asked a number of men what they were. They were obviously Ods, but they said they were Mohammedans. The ordinary Sindhi Mohammedan never brings his wife to work. Then there are a lot of Bhils who call themselves Mohammedans, but they are not. No true Mohammedan of Sind brings his wife on to the works.

A-1110. I was told that the objection to a woman labouring only exists among the clerical classes and among the labourers who receive very high wages. Where people receive the ordinary wage they let their women work also in order to add to the family budget?—That is rather a compliment to our works. Of course, the Mohammedan women work in their own private fields, but they will not come on our works.

A-1111. *Mr. Ahmed*: You pay Rs. 20 a month to some of the workers, and you do not give them a pension on principle?—That is right; peons and *patwaris* get pensions.

A-1112. We saw three persons seriously ill in hospital to-day. One told us he got Rs. 20 a month; another told us he got 10 annas a day; and the other told us he got Re. 1 a day. The latter was taken ill 5 days ago, and said that you will enter in your books the fact that he was dismissed 5 days ago, and that you had no concern to send him to the hospital?—I do not know of what people you are talking.

A-1113. I take it that to those to whom you pay Re. 1 a day, if they fall ill you enter their names on the dismissal list?—Not necessarily so at all.

A-1114. It is not your duty in their case, if they are ill, to send them to the hospital or take care of them?—So far as I am concerned, you are giving me a hypothetical case. I was not shown the man at all. He might have been a contractor's labourer.

A-1115. If a daily labourer is taken ill, you do not undertake to send him to the hospital?—No.

A-1116. Or give him any medical assistance?—Yes, we do.

A-1117. The man we saw said you did not give him any medicine or any assistance whatever, and I heard from your officers that he is liable to be dismissed because he did not do any work after he fell ill?—This is a matter unknown to me.

A-1118. You do not supply drinking or bathing water for the workers?—Not bathing water. I have already told you under what conditions we provide drinking water.

A-1118a. You do not give them drinking water?—Not if the source of supply is sweet and good.

The Chairman: This has all been gone into before.

(The witness withdrew and the Commission adjourned to Khewra.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

SEVENTEENTH MEETING

AHMEDABAD

Thursday, 14th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

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| The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. | Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. |
| Sir VICTOR SASSOON, BART. | Mr. JOHN CLIFF. |
| Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. | Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. |
| Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. | DIWAN CHAMAN LALL. |
| Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. | Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. |
| | Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>). |
| Mr. HOSEINBOHY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. | } <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i> |
| Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C. | |
| Lady V. R. NILKANTH | } <i>Lady Assessors.</i> |
| Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA | |
| Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. | } <i>Joint Secretaries.</i> |
| Mr. A. DIBDIN | |

Dr. JACOB SOLOMON, Honorary Secretary, and Colonel B. H. NANAVATI, C.I.E., Vice-President, of the Sanitary Association, Ahmedabad.

A-1119. *The Chairman* : Dr. Solomon, will you tell the Commission in a few words about the formation of your Association ?—Our Sanitary Association was formed more than 10 years ago. We have as its President one of the millowners here, the brother of the present President of the Millowners' Association. Then we have the Civil Surgeon and Colonel Nanavati as our Vice-Presidents, and various other people on our Committee. Our chief object is to help in the sanitation of the city. We have sanitary rounds in the city, and we ask Municipal Councillors, citizens and members of the Association to take part. We go round the city to see the housing cleanliness, sanitation and so forth. We make our reports and urge the Municipality to improve matters. Then we carry on propaganda in the city by way of magic lantern shows and occasionally cinema shows in the streets, the mill quarters and so forth, in which we have the co-operation of the Labour Investigating Officer, Mr. O. Rajan, the Assistant Director of Public Health, and so forth. We have also a male health visitor who goes round the city attending to complaints, himself sees some of these nuisances, and who moves the Municipality through me to do what is necessary in the matter.

A-1120. You yourself are a practitioner in the city ?—Yes.

A-1121. And your Association is a body of public-spirited citizens endeavouring to improve the sanitary and housing conditions of the whole city ?—Yes, the housing as well as the rest of the conditions of the city in matters of sanitation and health.

A-1122. I take it that as our enquiry concerns particularly industrial workers, in a place like Ahmedabad the industrial workers may be said to be affected by the sanitary conditions of the whole city ?—Certainly.

A-1123. Although a certain number of them dwell in *chawls* surrounding the factories, there are, I suppose, a great number of them spread in the city itself ?—Yes.

A-1124. In your memorandum you say : “ In the opinion of the Association the rooms stated to be unfit for human habitation should be demolished and their place taken by others of a more suitable type.” I take it there are many of these rooms which, in your

opinion, are unfit for human habitation ?—Yes, there are very many. I think there are nearly 10,000 to 12,000 in Ahmedabad which are unfit for human habitation.

A-1125. Have you been successful in persuading the Municipality to demolish any of these ?—We had an enquiry into the housing conditions in 1923, the report of which was sent to the Municipality in 1924. I am, and was, a Councillor and a proposal was made by me in the Municipality, but it was rejected and nothing was done. Up to the present nothing has been done, although there is a proposal before the Municipality to build 5,000 tenements, and a committee has been appointed to report on it. Some months have already elapsed and I do not know how far the Municipality will move to do anything in the matter.

A-1126. Do you tell us that the Municipality has adequate powers for dealing with these habitations ?—Yes, in the Act.

A-1127. To which Act do you refer ?—The Bombay City Municipalities Act, 1925.

A-1128. Then you say : “The Association would therefore suggest the Government should enforce by legislation that all Municipalities (including municipalities with industrial concerns) should have strict building bye-laws and see that they are equally strictly enforced.” When you speak of the Government, which Government do you mean ?—The Government of Bombay through the Act.

A-1129. You suggest that the Government of Bombay should have power to override the municipality ?—To enforce the Act, yes, if the municipality fail in their duty, especially in an industrial centre like this.

A-1130. Do you suggest that the Government should step in where the municipality has failed to act ?—Yes, and where, of course, the municipality is unable to do so, the Government may even give grants and do other necessary things, so that this state of affairs may not exist.

A-1131. In the long run in your opinion would it be likely to improve municipal government if you had the Bombay Government stepping in and taking things out of their hands ?—It is not actually taking things out of their hands, but by enactment compelling them to do these things and by grants enabling them to do these things.

A-1132. Is that done in any other case ?—I think the conditions existing in Bombay were so very bad, they were badly congested and so forth ; then the Improvement Trust was started and things were done ; a large amount of money was spent from the common treasury for the good of Bombay.

A-1133. *Col. Russell* : If I may say so, it is not unusual for Government to interfere in these matters in India.

The Chairman : No, but it is a question of the ultimate good, whether overriding of the local authorities results in much good in the long run.

Diwan Chaman Lall : In certain cases where the District Boards have not performed their duties properly Government have stepped in and taken away the powers conferred upon them under the Municipal Act.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : They have powers of supersession.

The Chairman : I am aware of that in other countries as well ; but the witness does not contemplate that ; he contemplates that the bye-laws should be strict and should be forced on municipalities by the Provincial Government ?—Yes. In the United Provinces there are what are called standard bye-laws of a very good kind put forward by the United Provinces Government for the benefit of the municipalities.

A-1134. But you have told us that you yourself are a member of the Municipality here ?—Yes.

A-1135. Do you not find that you can get support ?—In the Municipality, as at present working, it is very difficult to get support for any ideal thing like this.

A-1136. What is the chief obstacle on the municipality for carrying out these reforms ?—The first obstacle is the ignorance of the voters who return ignorant Councillors. I am nominated by Government.

A-1137. In your memorandum under the head “Health” you say : “It should be compulsory by law that every mill which employs more than 3,000 to 4,000 should have a qualified full-time medical man on its staff with all necessary equipments.” Do you consider that it is the duty of millowners to provide full medical service for all those whom they employ ?—Yes, I should think so.

A-1138. Quite apart from what the Municipality may do ?—Yes.

A-1139. You say in your memorandum : “Drinking water arrangements exist in most mills. The provision of drinking rooms should be made compulsory in each mill

under the Factory Act." Is there not a provision in the Factories Act at present on that matter?—I do not think it is compulsory under the Factories Act. The drinking rooms here were provided after the mill-hands threatened to strike; for that reason many mills provided these drinking rooms.

A-1140. In what way do you suggest to us that the present law is inadequate?—I suggest that it should be included in the Rules made under the Factories Act that every mill should have drinking rooms. Very often the workers drink hot water from pipes. Recently in the Marsden Mill there was a threat of a strike or a strike did take place, I am not sure which. Then Mr. Marsden provided ice for the workmen because the water from the pipe was too hot to drink.

A-1141. In your memorandum you make an interesting reference to this new system of ventilation which is called the "Carrier System". The Commission proposes to take an opportunity to see that modern invention. You also refer to the vacuum stripper in the card room of the cotton mill. Is the vacuum stripper in general use in Ahmedabad?—No, only in four or five mills.

A-1142. You tell us that your Association is in favour of enforcing an 8-hour day by law, "and until such time as this could be brought into force permission for working for 11 hours on any single day should be withdrawn." To what cases are you referring there; do any of the cotton mills here work 11 hours?—Yes, the maximum number of hours fixed by the Act is 11 per day and 10 hours usually. That maximum should be abolished.

A-1143. Do they in fact work for 11 hours?—Yes, on occasions they do.

A-1144. I am speaking of 11 hours actual work?—Yes, 11 hours actual work.

A-1145. There are mills here that are working 11 hours, not counting the hour of rest?—Yes, not counting the hour of rest. That is done on occasions when a mill is unable to work for one reason or another; then the next day they may have an 11-hour stretch with one hour interval, making 11 hours without counting the interval.

A-1146. That is done where there has been an extra holiday or where there has been a breakdown of the machinery?—Generally after a breakdown or a stoppage from some cause, and we urge that this 11 hours in the day should not be allowed.

A-1147. *Mr. Sastri*: Towards the end of your memorandum you refer to the financing of the great improvements that you suggest?—Yes, the Servants Self-Supporting Fund.

A-1148. You say: "One might wonder how the industry is to bear the additional burden. The Association believes that it is the duty of Government to put the industry on a sound footing so that it may be enabled to bear the additional burden." It is not clear to me how the Government could do that unless it takes the money of the taxpayer.—Of course, it is for the Government to find that out, but I might suggest that there might be increased taxes put on the importation of commodities when similar commodities are manufactured in this country.

A-1149. Then you suggest a measure of protection?—Yes, or bounty as the Government may think proper. The Government might have a detailed enquiry made into this matter. But, we urge that these things should be done so that the workers may be happy and healthy, and it is for Government to find out ways of putting the industry in a fit condition.

A-1150. But Government would want advice from experienced persons?—I think it would be for the financiers to advise.

A-1151. Later on you suggest a scheme of joint management of a fund to be raised in various ways. There is such a fund, is not there, though not in the precise form that you have suggested?—There is such a fund but only in one calico mill. We suggest that might be tried for all the mills together. A lot of money might be saved by these mills which are near together having one medical man between them and a properly equipped dispensary.

A-1152. Is it an essential part of your scheme that the public should be made to pay part of it?—It is not quite essential, but I do not think the public would object to it. One pie in the rupee might be paid on the sale of yarn and cotton cloth.

A-1153. In one way or another do you not see that the cost of your suggestions comes upon the public or the general taxpayer in the end?—Yes, to a certain extent it does, but for the sake of the health of these people, especially when we see them working in the mills and coming out of the mills in a wretched condition of health, I think such a tax would be advisable.

A-1154. As the moving spirit of a public-spirited Association, I should like to ask you whether you have taken note of the difficulties in the way of the realization of your object. Do you appreciate that a scheme which requires in the end that the taxpayer should be

additionally burdened in this country, runs the risk of being rejected on that very account?—Do you mean rejected by the people who take the benefit of it, or by those who have the power to vote the money?

A-1155. You suggest that Government should take this action. Government cannot take action unless it brings measures before the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Council is composed of representatives of the taxpayer?—But if, for instance, this Commission recommends it, then I take it there will be propaganda in favour of it and people will come to their senses and vote for it.

A-1156. In other words, your Association is convinced that there is no income left in the industry itself to support this additional burden?—It might be paid out of the Agents' commission, a portion, if not the whole, of it.

A-1157. It would be interesting to make a calculation as to what the Agents' commission amounts to, and whether, if it were spread over many mills and used to finance these beneficent schemes which you have suggested, that would be a feasible method of finance?—In the calico mill in which this scheme is being carried out the agent is taxed 6 pies in the rupee.

A-1158. Do you realize that your suggestions are somewhat drastic?—Yes, certainly they are drastic.

A-1159. You may be cutting at the very roots of the industry?—I do not think so.

A-1160. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What is the condition of health of the ordinary residents of Ahmedabad as compared with those employed in factories?—The nature of health of the ordinary worker in factories?

A-1160a. No, the ordinary factory worker as compared with the rest of the poorer population in Ahmedabad?—There are also workers in other labouring concerns.

A-1161. I am drawing a distinction between the workers in textile mills and the rest of the poorer population; is there any difference?—The rest of the poorer population, though they do not work in textile factories, work in other kinds of works like iron works. They are also labourers and there is not very much difference between these two classes of labourers; both come under the same category as regards health and living conditions. But if you talk of other poorer classes of people, then they are little better off.

A-1162. I am talking of the poorer classes, I am talking of the same class of people from which textile labour is drawn?—I do not think there is very much difference between the workers in textile factories and other labourers.

A-1163. Then would you advocate all the measures which are embodied in your recommendations also in regard to those other people, or would you restrict them to textile labourers only?—If the labour employed is very large then I would extend the same to the other works.

A-1164. If they are not employed in large numbers what would you do in regard to those who are outside the textile mills?—I do not think it is possible for smaller industries to stand the strain.

A-1165. You have advocated the imposition of taxation to make textile labour healthy and happy. If the industry cannot stand the strain you have advocated that the general public including those poor people should be made to pay for making the textile labourers healthy and happy; is that what you advocate?—The tax is very little; it is one pie in the rupee.

A-1166. I am not talking of the amount of taxation. Of course, one pie in the rupee collected in the whole of India would amount to a very large sum. I am merely asking you whether you think the State should impose taxation to make a small portion of the population employed in a particular industry healthy and happy?—If the State cannot afford funds from the general revenues, I think it would be justified, for the sake of health, in levying a small tax like this.

A-1167. Levying additional taxation?—Yes.

A-1168. In order to relieve one class of workers?—I should think so.

A-1169. You say in your memorandum "There are some mills in the city which are so cramped up for space as to render their further development and expansion impossible. If such could be removed to localities where more space is available, it would be better for the health of the workers thereof." That is to say, the old factory buildings are to be demolished and the factories are to be removed to more salubrious surroundings. That cost also should be paid by the State out of the general revenues?—Not necessarily, because there is the other alternative. They must either restrict their works to the available space, without making any extension, or, if they want to extend, go out.

There are two mills in the city which are a great nuisance; they are situated within the city walls and the owners want to extend them. If they are extended it means ill-health to the surrounding people and to the mill-workers themselves for want of space, ventilation and so forth. Either they must stop extending or go out.

A-1170. Every piece of building work that is done in Ahmedabad is, I suppose, subject to the bye-laws of the Municipality?—Yes.

A-1171. If that is so, any extension which will produce insanitary conditions would be objected to by the Municipality under its regulation?—The power is there at present; even now, notwithstanding the existence of bye-laws, buildings are rising contrary to building bye-laws.

A-1172. I was restricting myself to the extension of an existing factory. You say "if there is no space to extend, either do not allow them to extend or let them remove"?—That would depend upon the votes of the Councillors.

A-1173. The enforcement of building regulations will not depend upon the vote of the Councillors; that is an executive function; the executive officers are bound to carry out the regulations laid down by the municipality?—But the Municipal Board always interferes with the work of the officers by passing resolutions.

A-1174. In the matter of carrying out the rules and regulations framed by them and sanctioned by Government?—Yes, very often; that is why there is difficulty in Ahmedabad.

A-1175. Then further on in your memorandum you advocate very stringent amendment of building regulations to be applied to Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-1176. Do you know what its effect would be? Bombay has tried it and the effect has been a substantial increase in rents?—We are suggesting it for the sake of health.

A-1177. I quite see that. But you are in favour of a stringent building regulation which will have the effect of increasing the rents which in turn will be paid by the employer as an item in the cost of living of the labourer?—There are cheaper methods that could be adopted in the case of labourers, and I have mentioned them in my memorandum.

A-1178. You have given an answer so far as the measures that directly affect the industry are concerned, but what is your remedy for measures which will indirectly affect the industry by raising the cost of living in the direction of rents and other things?—I do not think the increase of rents would be very much.

A-1179. It is not a question whether it will be more or less, it is a question of increase of rent which is one of the items of a family budget which would have to be paid by the employer?—Increase in one way but decrease in another; there will be a saving in doctors' bills or something else. The final budget for the month may not vary.

A-1180. Is your position that any indirect burden imposed on an industry should not be of a character which would raise the cost of production and place the industry in a position not to successfully compete in the open market; or would you go so far as to say that it is better to suspend the industry rather than not to adopt the measures you have advocated?—I have stated that industry should be made to stand on a proper footing so that it can make a profit. The other measures that I have suggested are for the sake of health. They ought to be enforced, because if they are left to be carried out voluntarily, they are not carried out. The condition of health, particularly in a very congested city like Ahmedabad, is very bad and the nature and the degree of its badness can only be recognized by personal contact with the ways of living of the workers.

A-1181. I agree. Every one is in sympathy with improving the conditions in which labour lives, and especially regarding their health. I was asking you this question in order to ascertain whether you have considered the economic aspect of the problem and what the effects on the industry will be, because it is likely that if the industry is not able to stand on a sound footing and Government do not give protection as you have recommended, the industry may have to close down. You will not go so far as that?—I say Government should step in. It is a special disease coming on suddenly; drastic steps should be taken to eradicate it.

A-1182. I think every one in the Commission is in favour of doing all he can for the health of the people. I was merely asking you what would happen in a particular circumstance. You would not go to the extent of bringing about the closing of the mills?—Certainly not.

A-1183. *Mr. Clow*: You say in your memorandum "Some of the mill *chawls* were constructed with privies and the landlords with a view to save themselves from the municipal tax have either abolished or locked the privies to the great inconvenience of the tenants thereof." Does that mean that the tax is less where there is no privy?—Yes, that is so.

84. Will you give us particulars as to how the tax is assessed ?—There is a separate cess which is charged for a privy when the privy is existing ; they charge Rs. 400 as sanitary cess when there is one privy existing in a house ; they charge Rs. 100 when a man has no privy in his house but uses the municipal privies or goes to a privy anywhere. When people submit plans they make provision for a privy and when they build it, but afterwards they lock it up or pull it down.

85. The tax has had the effect of definitely discouraging sanitation ?—It has not so.

86. In your memorandum you say : “ It is neither right nor fair that the Agent’s commission, which often is excessive, should be the first claim on the industry and that it should be based on profit earned rather than on production only.” Does that mean you are in favour of basing the commission on production ?—No ; on profit rather than on production.

87. I thought you meant it was neither right nor fair that it should be based on profit ?—No.

88. What is the more usual method of calculation here ? How many mills base commission on production and how many on profit ?—Practically all the mills base commission on production.

89. *Mr. Joshi* : You said Dr. Solomon, that on account of the Municipal Commission being ignorant you cannot get reforms introduced. Can you tell us what proportion of the textile workers have got votes in the municipal elections ?—I cannot tell what proportion it is, but a very large number have.

90. What is the qualification for a municipal vote ?—I think payment of Rs. 3 per month or having a house which fetches Rs. 3 rent per month.

91. As regards your suggestion that Government should have power to compel municipalities, do you think that the present Legislative Councils will give that power to Government ?—Perhaps not, but I think the recommendation should be made.

92. You say that the monthly ground rent varies from 8 as. to Rs. 3. Is that for Government land or private land ?—Mostly private land. If poor people are given such a scheme, they will save much of their house rent and will be able to build better types of houses.

93. You want Government to purchase land and make it available for housing labourers ?—Possibly Government land may be available already ; if not, they should purchase and give it for this purpose.

94. As regards your welfare scheme you desire that it should be done by legislation ?—If you refer to the last suggestion of ours, I do not desire that it should be by legislation ; it is advisory.

95. You want it to be introduced by voluntary effort. Suppose a proposal is made that a workers’ welfare fund should be started by legislation, do you think it would be desirable or not ?—I think it is better to do it by legislation.

96. If there is to be a welfare fund established by legislation you have suggested that the public should be taxed to some extent ?—Yes.

97. Do you think that the employers also should be taxed to some extent ?—In so far as they themselves will be purchasing the cloth they would also be among the public who would be paying taxes.

98. I am asking you whether there should be no special responsibility of the employers as employers, not as members of the public ?—They may also join in it.

99. They should also pay contributions as employers ?—Yes.

200. As regards women workers you have made several suggestions and one of them is to restrict their hours of work in certain departments should be reduced. What is your suggestion ; by what proportion should they be reduced ?—I think it should be a restriction that women should not work more than 8 hours in the mills.

201. Do you desire that the hours of work should be reduced in any particular departments or in all the departments ?—In only two ; I have mentioned the winding and the reeling departments because only women work in those departments.

202. I am told that women also work in the spinning department ?—Yes, they do. I think the number of working hours only in the two departments that I have mentioned, then those women who cannot work longer hours and who have to attend to their household duties can work in these two departments while other women may work along with men in the spinning department and thus earn more.

A-1203. What will be your attitude if the hours of work for all classes of workers are proposed to be reduced ?—In fact I am in favour of it.

A-1204. You are in favour of 8 hours theoretically, but suppose a practical proposal is to be made, would you not be in favour of reducing the hours to some extent practically and not in theory ?—Yes, I should be.

A-1205. You were asked by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola whether some of your suggestions with regard to sanitation may have the effect of increasing the rents. Are there no methods by which you can make some lands available without increasing the rents ?—You might.

A-1206. If building space is made available the rents do not increase ?—The rents increase mostly because people hold up the land.

A-1207. So you think more land is available ?—That is why we have suggested two things—one is, imposing a tax on land lying vacant, that is to say, which is not used for building purposes and held up by rich men ; and the second is, to remove the tax that is imposed on agricultural land to be put to non-agricultural use, that is for building purposes. Our suggestion is that, for the sake of city extension, no tax should be charged on land which is within 5 miles radius of the city.

A-1208. So if proper methods are adopted, the rents need not go up ?—Yes.

A-1209. That is to say, you feel that building improvements can be made without necessarily increasing the rents ?—Yes.

A-1210. *Miss Power* : Dealing with medical facilities, in one of the memoranda submitted to us there is a statement that civil hospitals and municipal dispensaries are only opened during the hours in which mills are opened and therefore cannot be made use of by the mill workers. Is that a fact ?—Yes, that is a fact.

A-1211. Does that mean that the whole of the mill population have only such hospitals as are provided by the mill authorities to which they go ?—Quite so, unless they stay at home and attend the municipal dispensaries.

A-1212. Does that mean then that they do not go to the municipal dispensaries unless by force of circumstances they are required to stay at home ?—Yes.

A-1213. Was not the Municipality approached to take steps to keep their dispensaries open to suit the convenience of the mill workers ?—There was a proposal before the Municipal Council that the hours be extended to suit the convenience of the mill hands, but this proposal was not agreed to.

A-1214. What percentage of the workers, for whom the municipal dispensaries were intended, are actually mill workers ?—I cannot say exactly.

A-1215. I presume it is a very high percentage, is it not ?—I suppose so.

A-1216. Dealing with the question of health visitors you say there are none in the town. Have any of the local societies and organizations ever raised this matter with the Municipality ?—I and Colonel Nanavati, after our return from the Delhi conference on this subject, brought forward a resolution which was thrown out ; it was thrown out because the Civil Surgeon was against it unfortunately.

A-1217. Apart from that, was there any constant pressure from associations in the town for the inauguration of a service of that kind ?—One is about to be started. The Red Cross has promised to sanction the necessary amount for the purpose of having one lady health visitor ; one has gone for training to Poona and we hope to employ her within a few months.

A-1218. Dealing with sickness insurance you say “ The labour unions can arrange for this and the Government should contribute a certain percentage towards it or give a subvention.” You do not, I presume, suggest a scheme where the worker would not pay any contribution ?—The worker should pay his contribution himself and the Government should give a subvention ; that is what we mean.

A-1219. Would you have it run through the union ? You say “ Labour unions can arrange for this ”, what do you mean by that ?—The worker will pay a certain amount to the union and the union on its side will pay to the man when he cannot go to work due to sickness.

A-1220. Do you think there will be any objection on the part of the workers to pay their subscriptions to the scheme of sickness insurance ?—I cannot say that.

A-1221. You do not know ?—One mill here is having a provident fund, namely, the Advance Mill. They cut down one anna per rupee from the pay of the workers and contribute an equal amount themselves ; interest at 6 per cent. is added on to the total amount. The amount is returned to the worker after he finishes 20 years' service,

or to his heirs if he dies earlier. People do not take advantage of this system because they are ignorant. I am told that only about 50 clerks and about 45 jobbers and others have taken advantage of it in a mill of over 1,000 workmen.

A-1222. That is rather different from a sickness insurance scheme ?—Yes.

A-1223. You also deal with the question of maternity benefits. In one of the memoranda submitted to us there is a statement that the Maternity Benefit Act is not yet operative in Ahmedabad ; is that true ?—So far as I am aware, it is operating since a few months ; they have started within a year, after it was made compulsory by Government.

A-1224. Has there been a tendency to dismiss women on account of this benefit ?—I do not think so.

A-1225. You do not know ?—I cannot say. The Advance Mill have been giving maternity benefits during the last 12 years, far earlier than the Government thought of making it compulsory.

A-1226. You say : “ a minimum wage legislation is essential, as the first charge on the industry should be a living wage.” Could you enlarge that a little and say what sort of minimum wage you have in mind ?—If you take the family to be himself, his wife and two children, I think he would require at least Rs. 50.

A-1227. Is that the wage you suggest for a skilled or an unskilled worker ?—Rs. 50 is the minimum required for a family of 5. If both the man and his wife work the total wages should come to Rs. 50.

A-1228. You say if the woman does not work the man should get Rs. 50, but if she does work the man and the woman should together get Rs. 50 ?—Yes.

A-1229. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do you not include the two children ?—I leave them for the present.

A-1230. *Miss Power* : The minimum wage should have reference to the earnings of one individual and not of two. What do you think should be the minimum wage for an unskilled male worker ?—I should put it at Rs. 50.

A-1231. For an unskilled male worker ?—No, not Rs. 50,—the male worker and his wife, Rs. 50 for both together ; Rs. 35 and 15 will probably be a fair wage.

A-1232. *Lady Nilkanth* : You suggested that Municipal by-laws should be improved and enforced. I take it that you did not mean that Government should step in and take the powers which the Municipality has at present ?—I never meant that.

A-1233. You think that the present by-laws are faulty to some extent ?—To a great extent.

A-1234. Your oral answers created in me the impression that Government should come forward and take away the powers of the Municipality ?—What I meant was that Government should step in and bring the Municipality to its senses, make it realize its responsibility to the people and somehow or other see that the by-laws are carried out.

A-1235. If the Municipality does not do its work and does not enforce the by-laws, in what way would you expect Government to step in to bring the Municipality to its senses ?—For instance, in Ahmedabad there are about 10,000 to 12,000 tenements unfit for human habitation. The Government can force the municipality to erect temporary huts for these people till new ones are built and get the unfit tenements pulled down. Now nothing is being done except that a very few houses have been demolished and that too after pressure upon the Municipality for a very long time by the Sanitary Association.

A-1236. Is it not the duty of the Municipality to do that ?—If you pull down houses and evict people where will they go ?

A-1237. With regard to the tax on privies, is there a separate tax on every individual who uses a privy apart from the tax on the privy as such ?—No, not for every individual who uses that. I was not explicit when I explained the system some time back. The rule is : supposing there are 50 tenements and 4 privies every tenement is charged Rs. 4, not every privy. If there is a chawl of 50 tenements and no privies are provided, the cess is Rs. 1-8-0 per tenement.

A-1238. In order to reduce the number of hours women work you say that they might be asked to work in the reeling and winding departments, and reduce the number of hours in those departments. Would women with plenty of time agree to work in those departments instead of in the spinning department ; for working in the spinning department would give them more wages by longer hours than working in the other department which has shorter hours and would give less wages ?—When they have time they would naturally go to the spinning department.

A-1239. Even women with less time will be tempted to go to the department that would give them more money. Even if you give the concession to all the departments, is it not likely that in actual practice women would not take advantage of that ?—The women working in the spinning department have to work side by side with men and bear a great strain. Therefore many would prefer to work in the other departments.

A-1240. In your scheme for welfare work among industrial workers, apart from finance, what sort of action do you expect Government to take ?—In a place of such importance like Ahmedabad, there should be some co-ordinated action on the part of the various mills in the direction of welfare work among industrial classes. Government might legislate in that direction ; they might levy a small tax for the purpose, appoint a board of representatives for the various interests concerned or take any action they think fit to bring about this co-ordinated action.

A-1241. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In your memorandum you say that some of the housing accommodation provided by the mills is not fit for human habitation. What procedure do you follow before you condemn a particular area as unfit for human habitation and that it should be opened up and cleaned for rebuilding purposes ?—The Municipality gives a notice to the landlord saying that the house is unfit for human habitation, that it must be closed down or certain necessary changes must be made therein. If the Municipality thinks that the house will not be fit for human habitation whatever may be the changes made in it, it simply gives a notice that the house must be closed down within a certain period, say 1 to 3 months.

A-1242. In your experience is this notice commonly served by the Municipality ?—Yes. After the notice is served time is given for raising objections. These objections are gone into and the question decided.

A-1243. Does the Municipality serve many notices like that ?—It does of late. They have been pulling down some houses every year.

A-1244. Is a doctor called in to certify that the house is unfit for human habitation ?—The Health Officer is responsible for that.

A-1245. If the report of the Health Officer is a sufficient ground, why does not the Municipality do more ?—Because there is not sufficient space for the evicted people to go to.

A-1246. Could not the Municipality set apart some money for acquiring lands for these people ? Is there an Improvement Trust of any description here ?—There is no consistent action in the Municipality here.

A-1247. In that case, the Municipality alone is to blame, not the constitution under which it works nor the procedure that could be adopted ?—That is so.

A-1248. Is it not the duty of the Municipality to improve sanitation and housing by clearing up areas which are unfit for human habitation ?—Yes.

A-1249. With regard to the acquisition of lands by Government for building workmen's houses, do you know that the Holland Commission of 1916 recommended that steps should be taken in that direction ? Has anything in that direction been done here ?—I know only this ; once an offer was made to a Labour Union of a plot of land, and the Labour Union refused it.

A-1250. Who made the offer ?—Government.

A-1251. When did they make it ?—About the year 1920.

A-1252. With regard to the compulsory enforcement of by-laws relating to construction of tenements, you say in your memorandum that " this should not be left to either the discrimination or the mercy of respective municipalities."—Yes.

A-1253. Why should the Government intervene, when the municipality has got an Act and by-laws and does not choose to put them into effect ?—In important places like Ahmedabad where the failings of the Municipality affect a large number of people Government must take some action to make the Municipality do its duty by the people.

A-1254. You have a Municipality of 60 members, 48 of whom are elected by the people and it is entirely in the hands of the commissioners to take whatever action they think necessary in the interests of the city ?—Yes.

A-1255. If the rate-payers choose to elect commissioners who would not act, why should Government intervene ?—In the interests of the suffering population.

A-1256. But surely you do not expect local self-Government to be taken away from your people ?—But Government must see that local self-government is carried on for the benefit of the people.

A-1257. The rate-payers elect the Municipality and they get what they elect. What more do they want?—It is the duty of Government to find a remedy when large number of people suffer.

A-1258. In your memorandum you give certain figures relating to death and birth rates. Take the Khadia ward. Are there industrial workers there?—Yes, there are a few.

A-1259. The infant mortality per thousand births is given to be 376, or 40 more than the average for Ahmedabad. Yet there are no mills there. What is that due to?—That is due to great congestion. The density of population per acre is 213.

A-1260. But that is not a mill area and the millowners are not responsible for the state of affairs there?—A few mill hands are staying there also. But the death rate is high not only among the mill hands, but also among the ordinary citizens of Ahmedabad.

A-1261. That was exactly what I wanted to get. Yes, the death rate is high not only among the mill population, but also among the general population. But the death rate is higher among the mill population.

A-1262. *Mr. Sastri* : Are mill hands living in Raikhad?—Yes, they are living there. But the density per acre is only 54. A large number of people stay in one room tenements. The mortality is 327, not so very high as Khadia. Anyhow the general death rate is very high.

A-1263. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I take it you have no statistics except this to justify the statement you made that infant mortality among mill workers is higher than it is among the general body of citizens of Ahmedabad.—No.

A-1264. In your memorandum you say that wages should be the first charge on industry. Is that not so at present? You must pay wages before you do anything else?—I refer to the minimum wage or a living wage for the workers. Usually the Agent's Commission is put down as the first charge.

A-1264a. In your memorandum you say that "the death rate would have been higher if the people were not accustomed to sleep outside." In a place having the climate of Ahmedabad is there no harm if the people sleep outside?—When the houses are very congested it is better for their health to sleep outside. For 8 months in the year this can be conveniently done. There is neither rain nor severe cold during this period.

A-1265. With regard to your sanitary cess, is that intended to meet the cost of cleaning latrines?—Yes.

A-1266. Does that meet your expenses under that head?—No.

A-1267. Why then do you not increase it?—The system of cleaning the privies here is this: the sweeper of a particular street or an area has a hereditary right to that job. The municipality charges Rs. 4 per tenement per year, out of which it gives Rs. 3-4-0 to the sweeper and reserves 12 annas for supervision.

A-1268. Your sanitary cess amounts to Rs. 2 lakhs; whereas your expenditure under the head of conservancy amounts to Rs. 6 lakhs. Why do you not increase the sanitary cess to pay for the sanitary work?—What we get here is the cess on tenements with privy accommodation.

A-1269. But in Bengal each house in a municipal area to which the Latrine Section has been applied has to pay a tax whether it has a privy or not.—That is not the case here.

A-1270. Do you not think that that would be a good idea?—That is what some of us here are urging.

A-1271. Why does not the Municipality give effect to that practice which exists in Bengal?—It has not been able to do so.

A-1272. Then the Municipality is to blame?—They want to have the cheapest thing practically.

A-1273. You have told us about some chawls which were erected with privy accommodation, but that the privies were locked by the owners in order to avoid the tax. If you levy a tax on each tenement whether there is a privy or not, the owner would not do this.—I quite agree. That is what some of us are pressing on the Municipality.

A-1274. With regard to your drainage tax also do you follow the same principle?—Yes.

A-1275. I see that your expenditure is Rs. 4 lakhs against an income of Rs. 2 lakhs. Why do you not increase that tax?—We are now gradually increasing the number of drainage connections to houses. It will take some time for all the houses to have drainage connections and completing the drainage works. When that is done the taxes may be raised and the expenditure met fully from the income.

A-1276. In your memorandum you say that “the appointment of a Board of Health in mill or other industrial areas is advisable.” Would you be any better with a Board of Health than you are with the Municipality and the Sanitary Association, for instance?—Of course if the right type of men are put on the Board.

A-1277. Who would form the Board of the Health which you have in view?—I would put on the Board men like the Director of Public Health, a representative of the Sanitary Association, and one or two Government officers engaged in work connected with the mills.

A-1278. You still want Government officers, and nominees of Government; who will finance the operations of the Board of Health?—If the suggestion contained in the memorandum is adopted, measures can be devised to finance their schemes.

A-1279. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are of opinion that 11 hours work at a stretch is a hardship and that that must be divided into two portions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon?—Yes.

A-1280. In reply to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that the sanitary conditions under which the ordinary people live are about the same as those in which the mill-workers live?—Not in all cases.

A-1281. And the Municipality is responsible for it?—Yes.

A-1282. Is it not the duty of the Inspectors to report to Government the conditions under which the workers live and is it not the duty of Government to strictly enforce the regulations relating to sanitation and health?—Yes.

A-1283. Is it not the duty of the mill-owners to see to the good sanitary conditions of workers dwellings, even though it costs them some money?—But it is not every mill that has provided housing facilities.

A-1284. At least those that have provided?—No mill has provided for all labourers.

A-1285. Are you not in favour of housing accommodation being provided by the mill-owners?—Yes, as far as possible.

A-1286. Should they not in the interests of the health of the workers keep them in a sanitary condition?—Yes.

A-1287. As a rule are not mill areas dirtier than other areas on account of the smoke and other things?—Not only mill areas but several other areas in the city and outside are dirty.

A-1288. Should not the mill-owners keep them clean?—Some do, others do not.

A-1289. Is it not a good thing to make less profit and spend more on sanitation and welfare concerning workers?—Yes. The mill hands suffer much. Children are left in the streets while the mothers work in the mills. One child was run over by a motor car, because the mill-owners have not employed even a single servant to look after the children.

A-1290. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: That is not the case in all the mills?—No, not in all the mills.

A-1291. *Mr. Ahmed*: How many members of this Municipality are elected by the mill-owners and how many by the workers?—There is no separate electorate for the mill hands or for mill-owners.

A-1292. What will be the proportion of mill-owners' representatives to mill-workers representatives?—In the Paras ward all the commissioners are elected practically by the mill-workers and officers working in the mills.

A-1293. To what class does the majority of commissioners belong? Is there not a single representative of the workers there?—There are three members belonging to the lowest classes, practically elected by the workers.

A-1294. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is that a special constituency?—No. They have been elected by a majority of workers. And the Secretary of the labour union is the fourth man on the Municipality to represent the workers.

A-1295. *Mr. Cliff*: Does your memorandum deal with the mill workers and all the other labouring classes in Ahmedabad in the matter of health?—Yes. As regards

health it refers to all. But as regards particular schemes it is practically confined to mill workers.

A-1296. What is approximately the proportion of mill-workers to other workers in the city?—I could not exactly say. It might be 1 to 5.

Sir Alexander Murray: There are, I understand, 60,000 mill workers in Ahmedabad.

A-1297. *Mr. Cliff*: One witness says that the places where women work are mostly cellars, are damp and are therefore malarial. Do you agree with that statement?—The women carry the reels down to the lowest rooms below where the yarns are stored. It is the coolest part of the mill, but I do not think it can be called malarial.

A-1298. You do not agree with that witness?—No, I do not.

A-1299. In your memorandum you refer to the nuisance caused by the mills letting out waste water. In your opinion it is perfectly legitimate to call upon them to meet the cost of the disposal of that waste water?—Yes, certainly. Some are anxious to have the drainage extended to their premises and some are prepared to pay for it. A survey is being made. The sanitary association has recommended that Government should bear a cost of the scheme.

A-1300. Are there then some mill-owners who have not agreed to pay?—Yes, but at least some have come forward to pay.

A-1301. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Have the mill-owners' Association asked this to be done?—Yes, they have asked for drainage connections in the mill areas.

A-1302. Then it is the fault of the Municipality if that has not been done?—Yes.

A-1303. *Mr. Cliff*: Have the mill-owners asked the Municipality to do this?—Yes. My friend Col. Nanavati will explain the position. (Col. Nanavati): Some time back a special Committee was appointed to enquire into the best manner in which we could solve the difficulty arising in connection with the disposal of the suburban drainage water coming out of the mills. I happened to be the Chairman of the Municipal Special Committee at that time. Most of the representatives of the mills were asked to come in and they were asked whether they would contribute a portion of the cost of constructing the suburban drainage. I took down the names of about 25 mill-owners' representatives who showed their willingness to pay a portion of the cost. The others did not like to bind themselves in any way. They said that they would consult their mill agents and mill-owners, but never turned up afterwards. As a result of this conference it was agreed that a survey should be made of the drainage requirements of the area. It is but legitimate that the mill-owners should be called upon to bear a large share though not the whole, of the cost of constructing this drainage. (Dr. Solomon): There is also a resolution of the Sanitary Association requesting Government to pay 50 per cent. of the cost.

A-1304. You are in favour of minimum wage legislation?—Yes.

A-1305. One of the witnesses says that he is against minimum wage legislation, because labour is not trained to the level of having primary education and that it is unorganized and illiterate. Do you think that these are valid reasons against minimum wage legislation?—I do not agree; I urge that there should be minimum wage legislation.

A-1306. You stated that there should be a reduction in the number of hours?—Yes.

A-1307. One of the witnesses is against reducing the number of hours and he argues that the labourers have sufficient time after 6 p.m. when the mills are closed for recreation and rest. Do you agree with him?—No, I do not agree with him.

A-1308. That is with regard to the working man. Do the working women have sufficient time for rest and recreation?—They are perhaps working all the 24 hours either in the mill or at home. Besides working in the mill they have to work for their children and husbands.

A-1309. Are you in favour of making provision for old age?—Yes, something should be done to provide for a man when he is old.

A-1310. One witness says: so long as labour has not had sufficient education and does not understand matters of sanitation and health, there should not be any provision for old age. Do you agree with that view?—No. So long as men get old there should be some provision for them, whether they have been earning or not and whether they understand sanitary conditions or not.

A-1311. A witness says that there is provision of dining sheds and crèches in most of the mills. Do you agree with this statement?—No, I do not think that is correct. That is not the case in most of the mills.

A-1312. With regard to the improvements which have been made in erecting *chawls* and workmen's houses, it is stated that they have had a good moral effect on the workers. Do you know that good moral effect which has been produced?—There are some very fine *chawls*.

A-1313. How long is it since they were built?—Some are already built and some are in course of construction and they are very fine type of *chawls*.

A-1314. How many were built?—The Asoka Mills have about 200 of them. Each of them is practically a two room tenement. They charge Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 or Rs. 6. The ones for which they charge Rs. 4 have one room and a verandah where there are arrangements for bathing and cooking. The ones for which Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 are charged are practically two room tenements, the latter having larger space. People stay in these *chawls* according to their pay and habits.

A-1315. One witness says: some mill-owners make provision for crèches, drinking water rooms, education of workers' children and housing. Do you know any reason why the other mill-owners should not make exactly the same provision?—I do not know why they do not do it, but that is a fact.

A-1316. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Suppose the Government were to provide money for the building of tenements for workers, on Government land. In your memorandum you recommend a Government housing scheme. Would it work like this? The Government is in a position to borrow money at cheaper rates of interest than anybody else. Suppose the Government borrowed the money at 5 per cent., and got a return, as rent for these tenements, 6 per cent. Would that be a charge on the taxpayer? I am putting this in connection with the point which was asked about whether the general taxpayer should be taxed in order to provide housing accommodation for a particular class?—No, it would not be a charge on the taxpayer.

A-1317. In 1927, in the Ahmedabad mill industry, 44 out of the 49 mills made a profit of 1 crore, 23 lakhs, '76. If 6 per cent. is taken out of that as their profit, it would leave about a crore of rupees available for housing conditions. Money invested by these mill-owners in tenements is obviously not wasted money. The mill agents took 35 per cent. of these profits as their mill agency charges, and they allocated 36 lakhs for depreciation, etc., and there still remained a balance sufficient to pay a dividend of 18 per cent. If they were to invest a crore of rupees in building houses, and charged at the rate of 6, 7 or 8 per cent. on their total invested capital, that would not be a charge on the industry, would it?—No, I do not think so. They could easily do it if they had any sympathy with the movement. The Advance Mill is charging only Re. 1 rent per tenement, and they are trying to improve the condition of the people by offering prizes for cleanliness.

A-1318. What do you consider would be the cost of building 10,000 tenements?—I have worked it out per acre, the workers themselves building the tenements.

A-1319. Will you work out a figure for me for 10,000 tenements on that basis?—I will.

A-1320. Do the figures which you have given us in regard to Ahmedabad show that, unless there is an influx of workers from outside, Ahmedabad is a dying city?—Yes.

A-1321. Are you in favour of a scheme of sickness insurance for workers?—Yes.

A-1322. You mention bathing facilities. Are there any mills which provide such bathing facilities for the workers?—No.

A-1323. You have raised a very interesting question in regard to the taxation of land values. Have you worked out any figures as to how much the Government would be able to raise if that proposition were put into force?—No. I could submit figures later.

A-1324. What is your opinion with regard to the physique of the workers?—Their physique is very poor indeed.

A-1325. *Colonel Russell*: I think it will be useful to sum up what has more or less been admitted. In the Health Officer's Report for 1928-29 it is stated that "The water supply has not been adequate or satisfactory for many years. Drainage in suburban areas is absent. There is no efficient surface drainage. There are no *pucca* roads. There is a large demand for an increased number of markets. There is no infectious diseases hospital. The Health Department needs to be organized and staffed on a better footing. Malarial measures are not effective. Malaria has multiplied in the last six years by three times. There are no health visitors. *Dais* under the Municipal employment scheme do not do any effective work. The health propaganda as now carried on is practically wasted. There are no maternity homes provided by the Municipality." Taking into account all these defects, are you surprised that the death rate is higher than the birth rate?—No. The wonder is that the death rate is not worse than it is.

A-1326. *Mr. Lallji* : The mill-owners pay municipal taxes ?—Yes.

A-1327. What service does the Municipality render to them in return ?—The same service as it renders to all other citizens.

A-1328. Mention a few ?—They get their water.

A-1329. You want education ; you want maternity homes ; you want all these things to be provided by the mill-owners. What does the Municipality give in return for the taxes paid by the mill-owners ?—The mill-owners do not pay for their drainage when they do not get it. When the drainage is established, they will pay for it.

A-1330. Have you asked the Government for any grant for drainage works ?—Yes, but no grant has been given.

A-1331. What reason did they give ?—Want of money.

A-1332. So the Government is to blame ? You say that the Municipality has provided for ten qualified midwives, and that the people do not take advantage of them. If that is so the people are to blame, and not the Municipality. Again, you want to provide maternity homes, but if the people will not take advantage of them, why should the Municipality go to that expense ? You talk about the low wages paid to workers in the textile industry, but are the wages paid in other industries higher ?—No. I say the wages should be increased in those other industries too.

A-1333. If 60 per cent. of the people come from outside Ahmedabad in order to join the textile industry, surely the wages in the textile industry must be better than those paid outside ?—I do not know.

A-1334. Do the labourers spend money on liquor ?—Some do.

A-1335. What amount ?—I cannot say.

A-1336. Have you asked Government to stop the liquor traffic ?—We have.

A-1337. Has the Government done anything ?—Not in that direction.

A-1338. Does the money spent on liquor by a workman improve his general health ?—No.

A-1339. Do you know that three-quarters of the *chawls* in Bombay are lying empty ?—I have heard so.

A-1340. You know that the Government cannot even get 6 per cent. out of those *chawls* ?—It may be so.

A-1341. Something has been said about the mill-owners investing a crore of rupees from their profits in the building of *chawls*, which would add to their benefit. Do you know that the mill-owners have been investing their profits in the building of new mills, thus providing employment for an additional large number of workers ? Do you think that is a wrong policy, especially taking into account the fact that those workers are paid at better rates than they can get outside ?—They may be getting better rates, but they are not getting better health facilities.

A-1342. You do not mean to say that the condition of the labourers in textile industries is worse than it is outside ?—Certainly.

A-1343. They are paid more ?—It is not a question of payment at all, but of health conditions.

A-1344. Surely you will admit that their condition is a little better than that of outside labourers ?—I cannot say that.

A-1345. *Mr. Asavle* : With regard to the question put to you as to whether mill-owners pay taxes, do not the labourers pay taxes also ?—Indirectly.

A-1346. You say that the mill-owners charge Rs. 4 to 6 per apartment to the labourer. Do you think that is a fair rent ?—In the majority of cases it is heavy.

A-1347. Do you not think the basis adopted by the Advance Mill should be applied to the other mills ?—Yes, I should be very glad if all mill-owners were as sympathetic as the owners of the Advance Mill.

A-1348. What percentage of labourers have built their own houses ?—I have no figures, but a fairly good number.

A-1349. Are these labourers low-paid men ?—Yes.

A-1350. By residing in such houses do you think their health is deteriorating ?—Very much so.

A-1351. Therefore is it not proper for the employers to accommodate their servants in good houses in order to improve not only their health but their efficiency ?—That is what I say.

A-1352. You have suggested that land should be acquired by the Government outside the city on which to build houses. Do you think such houses would be suitable to the labouring classes whose places of work are far removed from that spot?—By “outside the city” I mean outside the city walls—near the mills.

A-1353. What should be the living wage of a worker, a single man, in Ahmedabad?—It should be more than what he is paid at present. What exactly it should be is for the Government to find out.

A-1354. Do you not think that the mill workers suffer more from diseases than other workers?—I think in some of the mills which are of the old type they are bound to suffer more because there is no proper ventilation, humidification and so forth.

A-1355. *Colonel Russell*: Have you got any figures to prove that?—No; it is only by experience that I am speaking.

A-1356. *Mr. Asavle*: Do you not think that the inhaling of the fibres and dust of cotton bring trouble and disease to the mill hands?—Yes; the fibres easily go into the lungs, and that is why we have recommended the use of vacuum stripper at the card room.

A-1357. Do you know what is the average age of a male worker?—He is a middle aged man.

A-1358. Will the average be 35 to 40 years?—30 to 35.

A-1359. Is it not a fact that only the head jobbers and the *mukadams* live longer?—I have no statistics to prove that.

A-1360. *Colonel Russell*: You do not mean to say that the average worker in Ahmedabad dies at the age of 30 to 35?—No.

Mr. Asavle: My intention in asking the question was to show that many of them die at the age of 30 to 35 and those who live cannot work beyond that age.

A-1361. As regards *crèches*, you say that half the number of mills have provided *crèches*. Do you not think it will be in the interests of the workers as well as the employers if it is laid down by law that all the mills should make this provision?—That is our contention.

A-1362. As many of the troubles of the labourers are due to want of education, do you not think that even the adult mill workers should be given education by introducing night schools?—The union is doing that to a certain extent.

A-1363. I am not referring to the union; I want that the mills should introduce night schools?—It would certainly help a great deal if that were done.

A-1364. Do you not think that it will help both the labouring classes and the employers?—Certainly.

A-1365. In the same way as many private concerns have a provident fund system, do you not think that if all the employers here were to adopt a similar system for the benefit of their employees, it would help not only the labourers but also would be convenient to the employers?—Certainly. As I said before, the provident system is in vogue in the Advance Mill.

A-1366. You think that the other mills should also introduce that system?—Yes, gradually.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. W. H. PHILLIPS, Inspector of Factories, Ahmedabad.

A-1367. *The Chairman*: Mr. Phillips, you are the Inspector of Factories in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-1368. Will you first tell me what is the area that you have to cover and the number of factories?—My area extends from Bulsar in the south as far north as Jacobabad, Karachi and Sind.

A-1369. And the number of factories?—Industry generally, in round figures, 200 perennial factories and 340 seasonal industries.

A-1370. With what staff do you cover that large area?—I have one Assistant Inspector of Factories, and myself.

A-1371. Do you feel that that staff is adequate?—No. We hope to get an additional Inspector next year or so, but at the present time there is financial stringency to consider. When I cannot get even an extra clerk I do not suppose I can get another Inspector.

A-1372. In your memorandum to the Commission you suggest two improvements, one with regard to the safety regulations, that accidents to any person within the precincts of a factory should be reported?—Yes, that would cover a number of non-workers, and in some cases children, who come into the factory compound bringing food for their parents.

A-1373. Then your proposal would be that the Factories Act should be amended so as to require the notification of any accident to any person within the factory compound?—Yes. I have given one reason and that is that in certain seasonal factories we find it necessary to prohibit the presence of children, who cannot be legally employed, in certain parts of factories where there is machinery.

A-1374. Your second suggestion refers to a new provision in the Factory Act requiring first-aid boxes in all factories, particularly in smaller factories?—Yes. Our experience is that in a number of smaller factories, seasonal ones in particular, they have very little material available to treat any wounds.

A-1375. Has the first-aid box been standardized?—Not at present.

A-1376. It would not be difficult to prescribe a standard?—No; I think we can have it on the same lines as in England.

A-1377. The cost would not be large?—The cost would not be very great.

A-1378. But the benefit will be very great?—Yes.

A-1379. *Mr. Clow*: In Karachi we found that in a particular flour mill they had a 12 hour shift?—They work on 12 hours shift but none of the workmen are supposed to work for more than 10 hours; the mills have got an exemption from the rest interval. As a matter of fact, the majority of people employed in the flour mill sit down and watch the machine.

A-1380. The workers' complaint to us was that they worked for 12 hours?—They are on call for 12 hours but their actual working hours are probably 7 or 8.

A-1381. Though the table showed two hours interval, we found on inquiry that the machine was not stopped for those two hours?—No, it is not.

A-1382. How can you satisfy yourself that they are not really working more than 10 hours?—I have been in these flour mills and I know that the men do not work all the time; they may be sitting down in one of the departments, they may be sleeping—and I myself have seen some sleeping—or they may have their meals.

A-1383. If you do not insist on the interval being given, as is done in the case of factories elsewhere, how can you satisfy yourself that individual workers are not working more than 10 hours?—There might be cases, but I do not believe that is so.

A-1384. Do you not think it is desirable that in cases like that where the nominal hours are 10 with 2 hours rest, the intervals should be prescribed for each class of workers in the register?—Sometimes it is extremely difficult. If one machine stops you upset the whole mill.

A-1385. The workers can be divided into groups, not classes of the same type of workers?—That is so, but it is very difficult if the workers in one department avail themselves of the interval at one and the same time. For instance, there may be four men in a department and if two are away the others may have trouble in replacing a belt quickly and getting the machine going again.

A-1386. The thing that I suggest has been done elsewhere in India, in Lahore?—These exemptions are not drawn up by me; I have simply to work them.

A-1387. Exemptions are granted by the local Government?—Yes.

A-1388. What is the nature of the exemptions?—They exempt from the necessity of fixing a definite rest interval.

A-1389. *The Chairman*: Will you consult your colleague in the Punjab in regard to this matter?—Yes, I will.

A-1390. *Mr. Clow*: What is the normal procedure as regards prosecutions?—If I detect anything which is at all serious and which, in my opinion, justifies a prosecution, I have to write to my Chief Inspector, giving him full details, and he sanctions the prosecution or otherwise.

A-1391. How many warnings do you normally give?—It depends upon the type of breach. If we find that women and children are employed at nights, we do not give warnings.

A-1392. We came across a tannery at Karachi in which the sanitary conditions were very unsatisfactory. It has been inspected a number of times and many warnings have

been given?—In connection with sanitary conditions we have not had many prosecutions.

A-1393. There was also trouble about employing children under age. You noted the fact at your inspection?—It was not my name; At one time the factory inspection department was combined with the boiler inspection department and the Boiler-Inspector, in addition to his normal duties, had to do factory inspection as well, and he never had the time to institute prosecutions.

A-1394. It is impossible to have efficient factory inspection if it is combined with boiler inspection?—Yes.

A-1395. Mr. Joshi: Has it come to your knowledge as Factory Inspector that in Ahmedabad there is a practice prevalent to some extent of children being hired out by their parents to contractors to work in the spinning department?—Yes, that practice was prevalent some years ago, and I together with the previous Certifying Surgeon made a detailed enquiry into that and made a report to my Chief Inspector; the details of that report were published in our Annual Factory report.

A-1396. Can you say that the practice does not exist now?—I cannot say that, but I know it is very much less than it used to be for the simple reason that the number of children employed in the mills is only 2 per cent. of the total number of persons employed.

A-1397. It has come to my knowledge that the practice still exists, and I want to know exactly how that transaction takes place?—As I say, to the best of my knowledge, at the present time that system is very nearly dead. But what used to happen was that a jobber or some worker in the mill would bring back two or three children from the villages and they used to live with him; he paid the parents a certain amount and kept the children's wages to provide them with food, clothing and housing. After all in many other countries you have more or less the same thing. As long as it is done properly there is nothing to say against it.

A-1398. Do you mean to say that in other countries the practice of parents hiring out their children on certain payments prevails?—It has been known in England, I believe; you may not call it the same thing. A certain portion of their wages goes back to their parents and the rest is kept for feeding the children.

A-1399. So long as only a portion of the earnings is sent to the parents, the man by bringing such children makes a profit?—I have no personal knowledge, but I think he does.

A-1400. In the statement appearing in your memorandum you have given 318 to be the total number of *chauls*; I take it you mean rooms and not *chauls*?—Yes; it should be 318 rooms.

A-1401. You say that you prohibit the employment of children under section 19-A of the Indian Factories Act. Can you say from your experience whether it will not be better on the whole that the presence of children in factories should be prohibited?—You will make it extremely difficult in certain areas because the children have to bring food for their parents; that is the custom in Ahmedabad.

A-1402. Are you aware that this practice leads to some accidents to children in factories? Recently, there was, I am afraid, an accident where one of the children was crushed by a motor lorry?—That was a baby and not a grown up child: the accident happened because the mother left the baby in a bad place; the mother is as much to blame as anybody else.

A-1403. The child was taken by the mother because the Factory Act allowed the child to be brought to the factory?—If the Factory Act prevents babies from being brought to the mill they will be left at home and given opium perhaps.

A-1404. Cannot the provision of crèches outside the mill compound solve that difficulty?—The whole thing is who is to provide the money.

A-1405. That is a different problem?—At the present time there are 32 mills which have crèches. That is a very big increase on the number I found here in 1923, when I joined here.

A-1406. The Chairman: May I put it this way. You will agree that if married women are employed a proper provision for their children ought to be made by their employers; is that your view?—That is my view. But I do not know that I am altogether in favour of having compulsory crèches. We have been able to do a lot by persuasion so far in some of the mills; you get very much better results where a thing is done voluntarily.

A-1407. You think that by making it compulsory you will get a low standard while if you do it by persuasion you will get a higher standard?—Yes.

A-1408. *Mr. Joshi* : You say in your memorandum "The majority of factories provide sanitary accommodation on a better scale than that which exists in the home surroundings." I would like to know your object in making that statement ?—Because the general tendency is to run down the millowners and to say that mills are filthy places ; the general belief is that they are filthy and very bad. But they are not worse—in many cases they are better—than the conditions in homes in the city here.

A-1409. Do you think that conditions in factories need improvement ?—Yes ; we have not reached the height of perfection.

A-1410. May I take it what you meant by that statement was that the conditions in the home surroundings must be improved very much ?—Yes ; after all the men are only working for 10 hours in the factories and they live in homes for a longer period.

A-1411. You certainly do not mean that the conditions in factories do not need any improvement ?—No, I am all for improvement, but that cannot be done until the Municipality has done something.

A-1412. As regards the reduction in the hours of work you say "The chief obstacles to this appear to be the poor efficiency and carelessness of many workers." Have you got any figures to show that the efficiency of these workers is poor as compared with the wages paid ?—That statement was made as a result of many conversations I have had not only with European managers here but also with Indian managers, spinning masters and weaving masters. When you examine one of these men you will see that their ideas on this subject coincide with mine.

A-1413. You know that a change from 12 hours of work to 10 hours was made some time ago. What is the experience of Ahmedabad ? Has the production gone down ?—That is a doubtful thing ; it depends on many things. But in several cases the managers have told me that the production has not gone down to anything like the extent they expected but that it compares very favourably with the old 12 hours output except of course in certain departments.

A-1414. The Tariff Board made some investigations on this point, and the Government of Bombay in their memorandum submitted to the Commission say that the experience of some mill-owners (not all mill-owners) has however been that owing to the increased labour efficiency (efficiency has not gone down) and improved conditions such as the installation of humidifiers, the production in the spinning department has been reduced to 10 per cent. while there has actually been an increased production in the weaving department. How do you reconcile this statement with your statement about the poor efficiency of the workers ?—It all depends upon what you start with. The statement refers to the increase but that does not mean that it is good even after its increase. It is still poor. I was thinking particularly of the output per man and quality of the output as compared with other countries and not the output per machine.

A-1415. The investigations that have been made show that the production has not suffered very much on account of the reduction of hours ?—I agree with that ; it has not suffered terribly, but what I mean is that if you reduce the hours to eight from ten you will get a very much bigger difference than you would between 10 and 12.

A-1416. A statement is generally made that the workers in the textile mills do not do full 10 hours work. Have you made enquiries as regards efficiency in Ahmedabad mills ?—It varies, in the best mills, in the weaving departments, from 85 per cent. to anything from 70 to 75 in the worst ones.

A-1417. So on the whole if the hours are reduced and if the workers give better work on account of the reduction of hours, no loss need be apprehended ?—I do not agree with you there, because although the best is 85 per cent. the greatest practical efficiency you can get is not 100 per cent. There are always many little things which cannot be overcome owing to human and machinery imperfections.

A-1418. Can you say that this lower efficiency—not 100 per cent. efficiency but 85 per cent. efficiency—is perhaps due to the fact that the hours are longer than the workers can work properly ?—I do not think so in the best mills.

A-1419. The memorandum submitted by the Sanitary Association says that "Phthisis is the chief disease probably amongst the mill hands as the result of inhaling the floating cotton fibres," and so on. Can you say that phthisis is one of the industrial diseases ?—No, I cannot. The Chief Inspector of Factories in Bombay had arranged to have a certain enquiry made by the Certifying Surgeon with regard to this disease. But that was upset by the strike in Bombay.

A-1420. But you have no experience on the point ?—No.

A-1421. Do you insist that the water provided in the mills for drinking purposes should be sufficiently cool and provided in a separate shed?—Yes, but you cannot expect it to be cooler than the supply which is obtainable in the city.

A-1422. Could they not cool it by adding ice or putting the water in porous earthen pots?—The custom is to have these big porous pots.

A-1423. Have you sufficient power to insist that suitable water is supplied?—The working of the Factories Act is: "suitable and sufficient supply of water." And the rules also lay down that there should be one gallon of water per person per day.

A-1424. *The Chairman*: You do not agree that some of the factories here are failing in that regard?—We had a certain amount of trouble at one time when there was a shortage of water. The Municipality was responsible partly and some mill-owners also were responsible to some extent, in not having made proper arrangements for storage of a sufficient supply of water.

A-1425. But you have sufficient power to see that this is done?—Yes, we have sufficient power. There will not be the same trouble next year as we had last year when there was even a strike on this point in one mill.

A-1426. *Miss Power*: With regard to enforcement of regulations you give an account of the number of prosecutions and the total fines for each year. They vary extraordinarily. The average fine was Rs. 17 in 1926, Rs. 32 in 1927 and Rs. 49 in 1928. Would you explain these variations to us?—In 1926 there were a number of cases against seasonal factories. Generally when cases are taken against these small seasonal factories in the districts we have no real complaint against the magistrates if they do not inflict very large fines, especially if it happens to be a bad year for cotton and if they know that the factories are not doing very well. Under those circumstances the magistrates do not inflict very large fines.

A-1427. Why were there a number of cases against seasonal factories in 1926?—We were able to do far more visits, partly because the Inspectors were changed. I went to Bombay and a new man came here. He was able to go round the districts and he was not known.

A-1428. If you were able to do that regularly, would the number of prosecutions always be as large as that?—I do not think so; it depends on the cotton year. Sometimes when it is a good season or a short season, or if there is variation in the prices of cotton, there is occasionally a rush of breaches of the Factories Act. If the cotton prices go up quickly the people want to get their cotton delivered and on such occasions breaches of the Factories Act become more common.

A-1429. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You say that the magistrate takes all these things into consideration when he delivers judgment.—We try and talk to him about that.

A-1430. You yourself talk to the magistrates. Do you fix the standard of fines?—We cannot fix the standard. The maximum is Rs. 500.

A-1431. Do you bring these facts to the notice of the magistrate?—We do sometimes. The magistrate will ask us what we think. But that is not always the case. The City Magistrate in Ahmedabad always consults me as to what I think reasonable and sufficient.

A-1432. *Miss Power*: Do you get any instructions from headquarters in regard to what should be regarded as a reasonable fine?—Generally, but not always. If it is a case of employment of women and children at night I always press for what has been the maximum so far, Rs. 50 per case.

A-1433. In your memorandum you refer to inspection by *ex-officio* officers. Who are they and how many of them are working in your area?—I could not give you the numbers. They include the Collectors of districts. The Collector of the district has wider powers than any of the others, but he cannot give orders under any of the technical provisions of the Act like I can. He can only see that my orders are being carried out or that the provisions relating to hours of work and sanitary and health regulations are complied with.

A-1434. How is the work of *ex-officio* inspectors co-ordinated with the work of the regular inspectors?—It varies considerably. Sometimes *ex-officio* inspectors are civil administrative officials, and if they are over-worked you cannot expect them to do much in the supervision of factories.

A-1435. Are you in favour of increasing the regular staff or increasing the number of *ex-officio* inspectors?—In several districts it is impossible to increase the number of *ex-officio* inspectors and also if two are appointed for the same area then possibly neither would do his best; for these reasons it would be preferable to increase the regular staff.

A-1436. I take it that they are not technically trained for the work ?—No, mostly they have powers only under the hours of work regulations.

A-1437. In one of the memoranda submitted to us there is a reference made to inadequacy of the toilet accommodation ; it is stated that the people line up outside the mill latrines on account of the inadequacy of domestic accommodation in this respect. Can you say if this is the reason, or if it is due to inadequate accommodation in the factories ?—The scale of accommodation is laid down in the Factories Act. Generally speaking, on going round the bigger mills, I do not find any particularly bad shortage.

A-1438. Have you noticed this in smaller ones ?—Yes, that seems to be the case in smaller ones. The place is not cleaned regularly, and as a result unfit for use. It is somewhat difficult to force the smaller factories to comply with the provisions of the Act.

A-1439. The Certifying Surgeon in his memorandum says that “no regular bathing places are provided.” Who do you think should provide them, mill-owners at the factories or the Municipality in the houses ?—There may not be regular bathing places provided for the workers, but they generally use, the ordinary drinking places for bathing.

A-1440. Are you in favour of making a provision in the Factories Act compelling the mill-owners to make provision for bathing accommodation for the workers ?—I think it would be a good thing. In the textile mills only certain persons get dirty, not all. The difficulty is that they have no bathing places when they go home.

A-1441. Is that not an additional reason why the mill-owners should provide such places ?—It would be a good thing if such places were provided.

A-1442. Ideally who should provide such places, the Mills or the Municipality ?—I think the Municipality should be able to do this sort of thing.

A-1443. Are there a large number of places employing ten or more workers but not coming under the Factories Act ?—There are a number of places dotted about, but the number employing 10 and more is not very large.

A-1444. Do you consider that there are some such places where the conditions are such that they should be brought under regulation ?—We try and keep a list of the worst places and watch them. If they employ more than ten we recommend to Government to have them declared ; if there are less than ten in a particular place we cannot register it as a factory.

A-1445. How many has the Government registered ?—About 20 in the whole of the Presidency. We watch their developments and as they extend their activities we include them in the main body of factories.

A-1446. Is this registration of unregistered factories considered an urgent problem at all in this area ?—In Ahmedabad it is not particularly bad ; in Surat there are a number ; in some of the villages they are growing.

A-1447. *Mr. Cliff* : How many have been registered in your division ?—The number is about 10 including Karachi.

A-1448. *Miss Power* : Could you let us have comparatively accurate figures of the number of such places actually in Ahmedabad, for instance ?—We have not the staff to do that thoroughly. When we go round we make a note of the likely places for the future.

A-1449. *Lady Nilkanth* : Has the number of houses increased in proportion to the number of labourers ?—I have no definite figures.

A-1450. *The Chairman* : We had it suggested that the factory population represents 1 in 3 of the general population. Would that, roughly speaking, coincide with your view. Or would you put it as 1 in 4 or 5 ?—I think it would be 1 in 4.

A-1451. *Lady Nilkanth* : It is said that 99 per cent. of the *chawls* are one room tenements. May I know how many persons there are for each room ?—I could not say.

A-1452. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In the Factory Report for Bombay I find the following statement : “Legislation and departmental action has thus led to an almost complete abolition of child labour irregularities”. Ahmedabad used to be rather bad for double employment of children ?—Yes.

A-1453. Do you claim that departmental action has led to a complete elimination of this evil ?—We practically found that that was so. We had a very comprehensive check. I checked a group of mills with the help of the Certifying Surgeon and the Assistant Inspector. We were able to find only one boy. That does not mean that we found out everybody ; we only found one where in similar group we would have found about 100 cases two years back.

A-1454. With regard to fines the report of the Factory Inspector says that reasonable fines have been imposed throughout the Presidency. Have you had any case of complaint that the fine imposed was an unreasonable one?—We had no cases in Ahmedabad. Only in smaller districts outside we do occasionally have one or two such cases. But they are all much better than they used to be.

A-1455. It also says that on some occasions you have to prosecute the occupier and the manager jointly and fine them also jointly?—Yes.

A-1456. Do you not think that that is a good practice and, if so, why is that not adopted generally?—For instance, in cases of unsatisfactory fencing of machinery the magistrates do not generally accept the view that the occupier is responsible, especially in bigger factories. And you also have to take a case against the manager. After all the occupier sometimes does not go inside the factory and he is not a technical man.

A-1457. But should he not be made to go inside the factory as well as the manager?—The manager is the man whom we have to take generally. The occupier in most cases will prove that he was miles away up on the hills for the sake of health.

A-1458. It rests with you Factory inspectors whether to press for a fine on both the occupier and the manager or not?—I personally try and do that in all cases of illegal employment of women and children. I find difficulty when it is a question of fencing machinery and we always take the manager in the larger factories although in some small factories occupiers have been prosecuted for failure to fence machinery.

A-1459. *Mr. Joshi*: Is it a fact that in Ahmedabad especially as compared with Bombay, the manager is really intended to be the legal representative of the employer?—Very often the manager is merely a shield; he is not a real manager.

A-1460. Therefore joint prosecution is necessary. Is that not so?—We do that in serious cases.

A-1461. *The Chairman*: But the fine comes out of the right pocket in the end?—The manager does not provide the money; the mill provides the money.

A-1462. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are there then two fines?—In the case of joint fines the total does not exceed the maximum prescribed for the offence.

A-1463. What is the maximum?—It is Rs. 500 for an offence relating to fencing of machinery. I obtained a fine of Rs. 400 recently.

A-1464. The Factory Report says that a fair standard of sanitation is maintained in Ahmedabad inspite of the difficult conditions. What are the difficult conditions?—It is the trouble with the sweepers. Theirs is a hereditary profession. If the manager sends away one man he would not get another.

A-1465. Why do you not adopt incineration or construct septic tank latrines?—We have no power to order any special system. All we can insist on is that it should be kept in a reasonably sanitary condition.

A-1466. Is it not possible to lay out septic tank latrines?—If water is scarce you will have trouble with septic tanks.

A-1467. Is there any reason why you should not adopt other means?—We saw in Ajmer that they were trying a type of incineration on a large scale.

The Chairman: It is dependent on the supply of sawdust?—The average mill-owner will be against having fires in his compound; in many of them there are dumps of every sort, and fire may easily be started.

A-1468. *Sir Alexander Murray*: There are six new mills in Ahmedabad. Is that so?—Yes, actually there are seven working now.

A-1469. Are the climatic conditions of Ahmedabad favourable to the textile industry?—No.

A-1470. Are they as suitable as Bombay?—No, not even as suitable as Surat, or Broach.

A-1471. How is it that no new mills of any description are erected in Bombay, while you have seven new mills here?—The labour conditions are better here than in Bombay; there have been no serious strikes here recently. The mills here appear to have some advantage over those in Bombay.

A-1472. *Mr. Joshi*: Do the Bombay Municipality prohibit the erection of new mills within the municipal area?—Yes, they do in certain areas.

A-1473. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the difference in the labour conditions here and in Bombay?—I meant to say that there has been no recent serious trouble with the labourers here.

A-1474. In dealing with housing facilities you call attention to "one of the best housing schemes provided by the employer...."—As a matter of fact I sent some notes to the Chief Inspector in Bombay and he embodied some of this in the Government memorandum. Then I was told that I must submit a separate memorandum, but I had very little time to make a suitable reply.

A-1475. With regard to medical facilities you call attention to what in your opinion is the best standard among all the mills concerned. You do not mean to give what is common to all the mills?—I have only given what is best from the point of view of medical facilities.

A-1476. Are you in favour of the employer being asked to provide housing and medical facilities?—I am really doubtful whether it would be in the interests of the workers to be provided with houses by their employers. For instance, there was a strike here and although the labour union tried its best to prevent penalization of the strikers, it is doubtful whether they succeeded.

A-1477. Will the same principle apply to medical facilities also?—Extension of medical facilities would repay the owners.

A-1478. *Mr. Ahmet*: Strikes would be fewer if weekly payment of wages were adopted. Do you agree with this view?—I know of one mill where this weekly system was introduced. The workers then came to the manager and requested him to go back to the old system. They were against this weekly system.

A-1479. *The Chairman*: That is very interesting. Which mill is it?—The Marsden Mills. I have heard of others and I could supply the names if required.

A-1480. *Mr. Ahmed*: What is your opinion?—I think the workers are more in favour of a fortnightly system, which is the usual system in Ahmedabad.

A-1481. If weekly system of payment were introduced would not the labourers be able to pay their debts more easily?—I do not think so. For instance, Seth Ambala Sarabai introduced the system of lending money to the labourers at cheap rates of interest. But he found that men borrowed more and their actual interest charges amounted to the same figure as before. The men were no better off.

A-1482. Will not the men have an advantage if co-operative credit societies were started and loans given to them at small rates of interest?—That would only help certain classes of people.

A-1483. With regard to advances from the co-operative society they take them for the whole month and pay interest for one month. If weekly payment of wages were introduced the workers need not pay interest for the whole month; it would be enough if they paid only for one week?—That is only if they pay interest.

A-1484. So you agree that it is necessary to provide the labourers with good accommodation and sanitary surroundings?—Yes, but not necessarily by the mill-owners. It is doubtful whether it is all in favour of the worker if accommodation is provided by the mill-owners.

A-1485. You think that the working hours should not be one stretch of 11 hours?—No, at present they are divided into two halves of five hours each with an interval of one hour in the middle for rest.

A-1486. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: With regard to the double shift system, in your experience, have you seen men working both shifts day and night?—Yes.

A-1487. *Mr. Clow*: Is working double shifts day and night by the same individual a common thing?—It is not at present.

A-1488. How do you find that out?—It is a most difficult thing to do. I got one case.

A-1489. *Mr. Lalji*: Out of ten working hours how many hours is a worker actually on his machine?—About $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 hours.

A-1490. We find from the report that employment of women is gradually increasing. It was 4,500 in 1914 and 11,400 in 1928. Can you give the reason for the increase?—Some of the workers came here from outside; and when they more or less settled down they brought their wives also. Secondly it may be due to the stopping of employment of children. That is one of the chief reasons.

A-1491. Why has that been stopped?—Because certain managers thought that we were too strict.

A-1492. If these children do not go into the factories what do they do between the ages of 10 and 14?—I agree with the idea underlying your question. I know that it is doubtful whether children kept out of the factory are not getting into far worse mischief outside.

A-1493. *Mr. Clow* : Is there compulsory education here ?—No.

A-1494. *Mr. Asquith* : If compulsory education is given will the children then be employed in mills ?—A certain number will even then be employed.

A-1495. Have you inspected the factories before and after the working hours to find out whether the owners are employing their workers during these periods also ?—Yes, I have done so. I have referred to them in my annual reports.

A-1496. How many cases of breach of the regulation did you find out ?—I am afraid I cannot give you the figures from memory.

A-1497. Did you prosecute the offenders ?—Yes, I can give you a list of the prosecutions for factories working outside the legal hours.

A-1498. Have you visited the factories on Sundays and other holidays ?—Yes.

A-1499. Did you find any men working there illegally ?—We did not find breaches of the regulation regarding Sunday employment, except in some of the small factories.

A-1500. What about the Bombay Mills ?—They are outside my jurisdiction.

(The witness withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY EIGHTEENTH MEETING

AHMEDABAD

Friday, 15th November 1929.

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.

Sir IBRAHIM RAHMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,

I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOUSENBHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. }

Mr. R. S. ASAYLE, M.L.C. }

Assistant Commissioners.

Lady V. R. NILKANTH. }

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. }

Lady Assessors.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. }

Mr. A. DIBDIN. }

Joint Secretaries.

Mr. CHAMAN LAL G. PAREKH (President), Mr. SAKARLAL BALABHAI (Vice-President), Mr. SHANTILAL MANGALDAS, Mr. KASTURBHAI LALBHAI and Mr. GORDHANDAS J. PATEL, on behalf of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association.

A-1501. *The Chairman*: How far does your Association represent the whole of the millowners of Ahmedabad?—(Mr. Parekh): There are 67 members on our printed list; that is about 85 to 90 per cent. of the industry of Ahmedabad.

A-1502. I understand your Association represents not only the owners of the cotton mills but others?—Yes. The 85 to 90 per cent. which I have mentioned refers only to the cotton mills.

A-1503. Within your Association do those who are the owners of cotton mills form a separate committee or department?—No.

A-1504. When you are dealing with matters solely concerning the cotton mills, do the other members take part in your deliberations or only those who represent the cotton industry?—It all depends on the nature of the question. In general other industries do not take part in deliberations as to matters concerning only the cotton mills; the other members do not take much interest in questions regarding the cotton mills.

A-1505. Then I may take it that your Association does constitute an executive organization of the employers in the cotton industry which is the main industry of Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-1506. And it is in that capacity that you have made the present agreement with the Labour Union for arbitration on matters affecting labour in your industry?—Yes.

A-1507. I notice from the papers submitted to us that, as the result of arbitration which took place in the month of November last year you came to an agreement that the union subscriptions should be collected in the mills by deductions from wages and paid over to the trade unions?—Yes, all the mills collect the subscriptions. It is not actually deducted from the pay, it is a separate collection. The subscriptions are collected and the money is sent by the mills direct to the Labour Union.

A-1508. That arrangement was said to be for trial for at least six months?—Yes.

A-1509. Now twelve months have elapsed and is that system still going on?—Yes.

A-1510. As employers are you satisfied with that system?—So far there are no complaints and we are satisfied.

A-1511. With regard to the cotton mills does your Association meet at regular stated intervals, monthly or quarterly?—We have a Managing Committee appointed by the general Board which meets every week to discuss the questions which come before the Committee.

A-1512. And does that Managing Committee deal with all the matters that are arising from time to time in the cotton industry with the Labour Union?—Yes.

A-1513. Does that Managing Committee itself meet the officials of the Labour Union?—Not every week, but if there is any dispute, we call the Labour Union leaders and discuss with them any points on which there is a difference of opinion.

A-1514. Then you do frequently meet the officials of the Labour Union?—Yes.

A-1515. Do you in that way clear up a number of small questions which are not important enough to go to arbitration?—Yes, we settle between ourselves any minor disputes or minor complaints of the Labour Union as far as possible.

A-1516. I notice that in your memorandum you say that no joint machinery in your opinion is necessary, following the phrases of our questionnaire with regard to joint councils or committees?—This is not a joint committee. When there is any complaint coming from the Labour Union we discuss it among the members of the Managing Committee and we come to a decision. Then we send for the leader of the Union and we try to settle it between us. But we do not deliberate with them before we come to any decision.

A-1517. If I may say so, you are not very far away from the system of a standing joint committee which would periodically review the circumstances of your industry?—We do not meet at present periodically.

A-1518. You only meet, I understand, when some question has arisen?—Yes.

A-1519. It would not seem to be a very great departure from your present practice to meet at stated periods and consider together the improvement of the industry, apart from complaints. However, I must not press you on that point. In your memorandum you tell us something about the organization of your industry, about the managing agent representing a firm of agents, and so on. Is there a uniform system in your mills with regard to the share of the agent? I mean are the agents here all paid on the turnover or are they paid on the profits?—It is on production or sales: none are paid on profits.

A-1520. Have you as an Association any considered policy with regard to the housing of your workers, or is it left entirely to each individual mill?—At present it is left to the individual mills.

A-1521. We noticed, as might be expected, a great variation between the best and the less good. You no doubt are aware of that difference: but I take it from what you have said that there is no concerted policy in your Association for the improvement of the housing conditions?—No.

A-1522. Is it your view that further housing should be done by the millowners or by the municipality?—By the municipality or jointly with the millowners.

A-1523. Are you prepared to meet the municipality with regard to a joint scheme for improvement of the housing?—It all depends on the circumstances: what are the terms proposed by the municipality and the condition of the industry.

A-1524. Again we have noticed with pleasure what some of your members have done with regard to providing crèches for the children where you employ married women; but again apparently the policy differs very greatly mill by mill. May I take it that there again as an Association you have no declared policy?—We have declared a policy that there should be crèches, but we leave everything to the individual mills. We agree there should be crèches in each mill for the children as far as conditions permit, but, of course, we cannot enforce it.

A-1525. I observe, not from your memorandum, but from one we have had submitted to us by the Government of Bombay, that there is a proposal under consideration between yourselves and the Labour Union for the establishment of a joint employment agency. Has that proposal made any progress since these reports were written?—I am told by our Secretary that there was a proposal from the Labour Union about this joint labour exchange, but the Managing Committee has not come to any conclusion and has not had the time to consider it.

A-1526. In the report of the Bombay Government it is stated that it is understood that the Labour Union at Ahmedabad has under contemplation the establishment of a labour exchange under the joint management of the Labour Union and the Millowners' Association. The details of the scheme have not yet been worked out, but it is reported

that the scheme, when finally evolved, is likely to meet with the approval of the Millowners' Association?—(Mr. Patel): There was a proposal from the Labour Union to the effect that an exchange ought to be set up in Ahmedabad. It was discussed with me personally by the authorities of the Labour Union, and they promised that they would prepare a definite scheme. I asked them to prepare that scheme and submit it to us in writing. Since that time we have been awaiting a definite scheme from the managing committee of the Union.

A-1527. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: There has been a certain amount of criticism of the policy of the managing agents taking their remuneration on production and not on profits. Would your Association object very strongly if their form of remuneration were altered to one on profits instead of on production?—(Mr. Parekh): Yes, we would object.

A-1528. You consider your present policy is more favourable to the millowners than a system of remuneration on profits?—Yes. The position of the managing agents here is quite different from that in Bombay and other centres. The managing agents collect the capital in the beginning, giving a portion of the commission to each partner or shareholder according to the capital he subscribes. The managing agent or the chief partner of the firm is not getting the whole of the commission.

A-1529. Therefore it would not be possible to make any alteration, owing to what has happened in the past?—Yes. It is suited to the local conditions.

A-1530. How do the wages in the mill industry compare with those industries outside the mill industry in Ahmedabad and with wages in the rural districts surrounding Ahmedabad?—The men in the villages are not better off than the labour in the textile industry.

A-1531. Is the man employed in the textile industry better off than in any other industries in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-1532. And you say men employed in the mills are better off than the men in the villages, even allowing for the payments in kind which are given in villages?—Yes.

A-1533. If your hours of work were shortened would you expect your output to suffer?—It would suffer a lot.

A-1534. Did your output suffer much when the hours were reduced from 12 to 10?—Yes, the spinning section suffered a lot; it suffered exactly in proportion to the reduction in hours.

A-1535. Did the weaving section suffer?—Not to the same extent.

A-1536. If there were a further shortening of hours, would you expect both sections to suffer?—Certainly.

A-1537. Why would you expect that to be so?—Because by reducing hours we have come to the proper efficiency in the weaving section.

A-1538. In other words, your efficiency was so much lower before that they could catch up by increased efficiency?—Exactly.

A-1539. But you think that now, having become more efficient, there is no scope for improving that efficiency?—Yes.

A-1540. And am I right in thinking that the installation of modern machinery which is semi-automatic would not allow much room for increased personal efficiency; that if your machinery is better and produces more, the increased production depends more on the machinery than on the man?—It depends on both the man and the machinery.

A-1541. You do not agree that if you improve your machinery the labour has not so much to do with increased production?—No.

A-1542. Are you quite sure that your labour has reached the highest form of efficiency, for instance, would you say that a man looking after one side spinning 10's counts is doing more or less work than a man on one side spinning 60's?—The man doing 10's will be doing more work.

A-1543. Therefore the man working on 60's could improve his efficiency if he is not doing as much work as a man on 10's?—But the production will not be increased. (Mr. Sakarlal): The man who works on 10's has to mind a smaller number of spindles than the man who works on 60's so that their total work comes to the same thing.

A-1544. Do you not think on 60's you could look after twice the number of spindles that you could look after on 10's?—No, not twice the number.

The Chairman: I think it depends on the mixing.

A-1545. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What is the cost of land in Ahmedabad in the city ?—It all depends on the locality.

A-1546. Where your mills are, in the city ?—In the old days they were in the heart of the city but nowadays new mills are built very far from the city.

A-1547. What is the value of the land in the city where the old mills are ?—It varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 a square yard. Where the new mills are being built it costs about Re. 1 or Rs. 2. But here in Ahmedabad most of the mills have got the land on lease.

A-1548. I suppose it would not be possible for the mills inside Ahmedabad to arrange for any housing for their employees because the cost of the land would be too high ?—Yes.

A-1549. What is the point of view of the trade union to this question of houses being provided by the employers ?—They are keen on having houses supplied by the millowners.

A-1550. You are quite sure the trade union would encourage the mills to supply houses ?—Yes.

A-1551. They would prefer that rather than that the houses should be provided by the Municipality or other sources ?—They of course submitted the scheme to the Municipality for the housing of labour.

A-1552. I am asking the question because some unions have objected to the employers supplying houses for their own employees ?—They are not so particular so far as I understand, so long as they get houses.

A-1553. In some places where we have been it has been suggested that the payment of wages should be weekly. Would you as an employer have any great objection to that ?—Oh yes, as an employer I should have great objection, because we should have more absenteeism. It generally happens that on the day after the payment of wages there are some absentees. We should also have more changes in our hands.

A-1554. Would your labour prefer to be paid weekly or fortnightly as at present ?—They have never demanded it up to now, so that we do not know their views.

A-1555. I have been told that a certain mill did try paying weekly, but the labour objected. Do you know anything about that ?—No.

A-1556. Would you say that a large majority of the mill-hands are in debt ?—Some section may be in debt, about half. We have no data on that matter.

A-1557. If they were paid weekly do you think it would enable some of those who are in debt to get out of debt ?—They would be in more debt because they would spend what they got every week.

A-1558. They would not pay their debts off ?—No.

A-1559. Is it the custom here for the mill-hands to buy their supplies for cash or on credit ?—Some for cash and some on credit.

A-1560. Is the cash price much lower than the credit price ?—It might be, but not necessarily. Probably they would have to pay a little more if they buy on credit.

A-1561. *Mr. Cliff* : Do the employers pay fortnightly here ?—Yes.

A-1562. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Might it not be found that if a man was paid weekly he could then buy his food for cash and get it cheaper ?—They have the habit of buying on credit and they would probably buy on credit even if they had the money.

A-1563. So that they would not be any better off if they were paid weekly ?—No.

A-1564. Have any of the millowners co-operative loan societies ?—No, but advances are made by the mills against wages. The employees cannot get advances every day, but before any big holiday advances are given against wages.

A-1565. *Mr. Joshi* : Is interest charged ?—No.

A-1566. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Has any attempt been made to establish cheap grain shops for your millhands ?—Some mills have done so.

A-1567. Are they popular ?—They are not so popular.

A-1568. Why not ?—Because they do not sell on credit unless the employee has a certificate from the timekeeper and so on ; they have to go through formalities and so the work-people prefer to stick to their old customs.

A-1569. Do you think it may be that even if an employee is not in debt, he would prefer not to leave his *baniya* because the day might come when he might not be working and might want to borrow from the *baniya* ?—Yes.

A-1570. Do you think that might keep him away from the mill shop ?—Yes.

A-1571. You have said that your Association is working very closely with the trade union?—Yes.

A-1572. Do you think it might be of advantage if you set up a permanent body partly composed of members of your Managing Committee and partly of members of the Union, to go into minor questions and see if they could settle them without going to the main body?—It is done in that way, but it is not a regular joint conference as suggested by the Chairman. Generally any complaint comes to the Secretary. If the Secretary cannot settle it with the Labour Union, he puts it before the Managing Committee. We are satisfied with the present arrangement, so that there is no need to go into the matter at present.

A-1573. Has the Secretary authority to settle any complaint where he thinks the Labour Union is right?—The first complaint is made in the mill. Each mill has one or two members of the Union working in the mill. Any complaint by the labour is first made to those men. The union member goes to the head of the department, the head jobber. The head jobber then goes to the head officer. If nothing is done, the work-people complain to the Labour Union, and the Labour Union writes to the Association. The Secretary enquires how the matter stands, and, if he thinks fit, he tells the mill to remove this cause of complaint; if the mill does so, the matter does not come to our Managing Committee at all.

A-1574. If the Secretary thinks the complaint is justified, he tells the mill they are wrong?—Yes.

A-1575. And the manager of the mill takes his advice?—Yes; if they think the Secretary is wrong, they will say they are not prepared to do it, and then it is bound to come to the Managing Committee.

A-1576. Your bleaching is done by contractors?—Yes, there are certain sections done by contractors.

A-1577. Is there any measure of control over your contractors? I mean do you know or bother as to what wages they pay their men?—No, we do not.

A-1578. Your only control over them is to see that they deliver you good bleached cloth?—Yes.

A-1579. You cannot control the way they do it?—No.

A-1580. Or the hours of labour?—They have to work according to the Factory Act because they are working in the mill itself.

A-1581. But I understand some of your contracting is done outside the mill?—Then we do not interfere.

A-1582. And as no power is used, the Factory Act does not apply. They can work much longer hours; that does not concern you?—It does not concern us.

A-1583. When cloth is damaged by a weaver, do you fine him or do you make him take the cloth at cost?—It depends on the extent of the damage done. If it is badly damaged we give the cloth back to him.

A-1584. Does he object to that?—No, he does not complain.

A-1585. Is it true that in the majority of cases he either does not lose or loses very little by getting the cloth back and disposing of it?—Yes.

A-1586. He would much prefer to have the cloth back than be dismissed?—Yes.

A-1587. Would he prefer to be fined?—It depends on the amount of the fine.

A-1588. Do you find it possible to prevent the jobbers you employ taking bribes from the workmen?—We do our best to stop bribery. We rely on the heads of the departments who look to the assistant; the assistant relies upon the jobbers.

A-1589. Then you do ultimately rely upon the jobber?—We have to.

A-1590. Is there a surplus or a shortage of labour?—Neither.

A-1591. In the morning are there a number of work-people outside your gates waiting for employment?—Yes.

A-1592. Would there be any objection to the assistant calling them in and engaging them directly?—If we are short of men he may do that.

A-1593. I suppose you only employ the jobber when there is nobody suitable waiting at the gate?—Yes.

A-1594. Does the jobber or the assistant select the men?—The jobber, because he is responsible for the job.

A-1595. Do you find that the labour unions are in favour of jobbers or against jobbers ?
—They admit jobbers to their union.

A-1596. So that the labour union are in favour of jobbers ?—Yes.

A-1597. Do the labour unions ever complain about jobbers taking bribes from the men ?—Yes.

A-1598. But why should they if the men are in their own union ?—There is a clear understanding that if a man is found taking bribes or anything of that sort they will bring it to the notice of the assistant. They ask the mill to dismiss him.

A-1599. Are you in favour of having an employment officer ?—No.

A-1600. You prefer to leave it to the jobber ?—Yes.

A-1601. Are you in favour of the establishment of employment agencies by the Municipality or by Government ?—No, not at present ; we do not need it.

A-1602. You do not think it is necessary ?—No:

A-1603. Because you find that labour comes to you as you want it ?—Yes.

A-1604. Would you suggest that every company should insure itself under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—It is not necessary, because generally all mills do insure under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

A-1605. But you would not suggest that there should be any compulsion ?—It should not be made compulsory.

A-1606. You would be against compulsion ?—Yes.

A-1607. Why would you be against compulsion ?—Because it is a question of taking risk ; it is purely self-insurance.

A-1608. But suppose an employer has not enough money to pay, the workmen might suffer ?—Yes. For instance, every employer of big labour, having one thousand workers under him, may not be in a position to pay premium for such a large number of workmen.

A-1609. *Mr. Joshi* : So your view is that compulsion is necessary in the case of employers who have a smaller number of labour ?—It may be done in the case of smaller companies, but compulsion is not necessary as far as we are concerned.

A-1610. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : So far as big companies are concerned, I take it there might be an objection in that the insurance companies might raise their rates if they knew it was compulsory ?—Exactly.

A-1611. Do you consider that standardization of wages is a good thing or not ?—We have had no occasion to consider that point.

A-1612. You do not think there might be an advantage in having the wages standardized for all the industries ?—In Ahmedabad we have practically got standardization of wages.

A-1613. Do you mean to say that the rate of wages is the same in every mill in Ahmedabad ?—In the spinning department they all have a uniform rate ; only in the frame department piece-wages are given. As regards daily wages they are practically uniform in all the mills ; if at all, there might be a difference of half a rupee or quarter of a rupee a month this side or that.

A-1614. As far as daily wages are concerned you would not have any objection to standardization because you say you have already got uniformity ?—As we ourselves have made standardization there is no necessity to standardize them again. Some mills have been situated in a better position and may get labour at eight annas or a rupee less than the other mills, and I do not see why that mill should be penalized by standardizing the wages especially when it can get labour at one rupee less owing perhaps to the fact that more facilities are offered by that mill to the labourers.

A-1615. You would leave the differences as they are ?—I do not think the difference is much ; it all depends on whether the machinery is new or old. If both new and old machinery is working in the same mill, there is a difference in rating.

A-1616. You say there is a bigger difference in piece-work than there is in time work because of the difference in machinery ?—Exactly.

A-1617. Would you say that the municipal service given by the Municipality here is satisfactory, generally speaking ? Does the Municipality do its work satisfactorily for the rates that you pay ?—It does its work most unsatisfactorily.

A-1618. I understand you are in favour of the mills making provision for crèches ?—Yes.

A-1619. Would you be in favour of that being made compulsory by law ?—No.

A-1620. For any reason ?—If there is any compulsion we have to abide by a number of rules and regulations.

A-1621. Would you say that if it were made compulsory certain millowners might substitute boys for women ?—I cannot say that.

A-1622. Then why do you object to its being made compulsory ?—As I said, we have to abide by a number of rules and regulations which might create unnecessary hardship. The Inspector's orders will have to be carried out every time, which means not only botheration to us but more expense to the industry.

A-1623. Would you agree that there should be a supply of drinking water in all the mills ?—We have it here.

A-1624. A sufficient supply ?—Yes. The municipality, of course, do not supply so much, but several mills have got their own wells which supply water in case of need.

A-1625. I understand the trade union complains that some mills do not give a proper supply ?—It may be in the suburb.

A-1626. Do you think that they should be given a proper supply ?—The municipality should give.

A-1627. But the mills ?—The mills are already giving.

A-1628. Would your mills always be prepared to put on extra taps if the labour ask for them ?—Yes. We generally have some *bhishties* to store up water in the mill compound.

A-1629. You think that the Labour Union is wrong in complaining that certain mills are not giving sufficient supply of water ?—That is not a regular complaint ; when we receive any complaint we immediately try to remedy it.

A-1630. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I see that the Factory Inspector's Report for 1928 says that Ahmedabad is not climatically so suitable for spinning as other parts of India such as Bombay, yet I see you are building several new mills. I want to know why inspite of climatic conditions the industry has developed so well in Ahmedabad and why you are now building several new mills here whereas in Bombay we find that no new mills have been built for several years ?

The Chairman : Do you not think, *Sir Alexander Murray*, that modesty will prevent them from speaking ?

The witness (Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : That is a question for the Tariff Board.

Divan Chaman Lal : It is a very important question.

The witness (Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : There are various reasons for that and if we begin to explain them it will take a very long time. Because several new mills are being built in Ahmedabad that does not mean that the condition of trade here is better than elsewhere. There are various reasons for that.

A-1631. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Give me three reasons ?—One reason is that there is no other trade in Ahmedabad in which people can invest their capital.

A-1632. Is there any other trade in Bombay ?—There are many export and import trades.

A-1633. That is one reason ; what is your second reason ? You said that you have only one industry in Ahmedabad and to find an outlet for your money you have got to put it in cotton mills. May I know how you made that money ?—From the cotton mills and several other minor trades.

A-1634. You said there is no other trade ?—We have minor trades.

A-1635. Chiefly you made money from the cotton mills ?—Yes.

A-1636. And now you put more into cotton mills ?—Yes.

A-1637. Is it the case that as a result of building these new mills the industry has expanded more rapidly than have the amenities of the municipality ; that is to say, the amenities which the municipality supplies, namely, water, drainage, conservancy, etc., have not kept pace with the expansion of the mills ?—Yes.

A-1638. What special steps are you taking to see that the new mills are properly equipped with housing, water, drainage, conservancy, etc. ?—We have our own wells.

A-1639. You make your own wells for the supply of water ?—Yes.

A-1640. Do you also make your own drainage to carry away the surplus water ?—There is no drainage.

A-1641. So the surplus water lies about ?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): That is at times carried by bullock carts ; if the compound is big, we sprinkle the water by means of pumps.

A-1642. What have you done in the way of sanitary and latrine accommodation ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai): We keep our own staff.

A-1643. There again you cart it ; there is no drainage ?—No.

A-1644. Have any of you septic tanks ?—There might be only one.

A-1645. Why do you not have them ?—It has been found in Bengal, and I think in other parts of India too, that septic tanks are very neat and good and help you in getting rid of the trouble of employing sweepers ?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): I understand it requires more water.

A-1646. Yes, it requires water ?—We are short of water, and that is one of the reasons why we cannot have it.

A-1647. Then I see that the Factory Inspector says that sanitation and cleanliness in factories here are at a higher scale than they are outside the factories, i.e., in the town. I suppose you agree with that ?—Exactly so.

A-1648. But he also says that he gets only a reasonable amount of co-operation from the factory managers. What does he mean by that ? When the Factory Inspector asks you to do anything do you not do that ?—As far as possible, we always try to meet his wishes.

A-1649. In the Factory Inspector's Report it is stated : " A fair standard is maintained in Ahmedabad under very difficult conditions, and this is only secured by constant attention on the part of the inspectorate and a *reasonable* amount of co-operation from the factory managers." Why does he say a "reasonable" amount of co-operation instead of "wholehearted" co-operation ?—He can answer that very well rather than we.

A-1650. From your statement I see that 80 per cent. of your labour is permanent labour, that is to say, that has come from the districts and is now working in your mills ?—Exactly.

A-1651. Do you not feel that there is a special responsibility on you as employers of labour to see that these workers, who are drawn from the countryside and are now permanently settled in the town, are properly looked after from the point of view of housing, water supply, drainage, conservancy, etc. ?—We try our best to give all sorts of comforts as far as possible, and every year we are extending the *chawls*.

A-1652. You said that as there is practically uniformity in the matter of wages you experience no trouble, and from the reply you gave to Sir Victor Sassoon I understand you have a committee which meets often to discuss what ought to be done as a body. Why do you not discuss as a body questions connected with housing so that you can have uniformity in this respect also ?—That is not possible ; each and every member cannot become uniform in building houses because one may be financially sound and the other may not be so.

A-1653. If it is possible for you to be uniform regarding wages, is it not possible for you to be uniform as regards building houses ?—It is not possible.

A-1654. Why ?—As I said, one may be financially strong and the other may not be ; all the mills are not making uniform profits. I think the question is more or less for the municipality to take up.

A-1655. That is quite true. I see that in your memorandum you make a reference to the town planning schemes. You say : " Reservations of certain areas for industrial housing have been made in town-planning schemes." Will you tell us what these town-planning schemes are ?—(Mr. Gordhandas Patel): Three schemes were sanctioned by the municipality here : one was the Ellisbridge town-planning scheme, the second was the Jamalpur town-planning scheme, and the third one was the Kankaria town-planning scheme. In Takaria, Mr. Mirams, the Consulting Surveyor to Government, reserved certain plots for housing of labour. That scheme, unfortunately, has not yet come into operation through some difficulty ; and therefore the other two schemes also are awaiting further progress. We do not know anything further in the matter except that one scheme has been sanctioned.

A-1656. You, as a body, have not made representations to the municipality or to the Government of Bombay for acquisition of land for building workmen's houses ?—No, we are much afraid of Government. In our opinion, the experience derived from the system adopted in Bombay in building *chawls* is not good, if not wrong.

A-1657. You might want to build *chawls*. My own experience is that far away from the mills you can build much more better houses than you could near the mills. Have

you made any application to the local Government or to the municipality for the acquisition of land for your workmen's houses ?—No.

A-1658. Do you not think that should be done ?—The schemes are not yet complete.

A-1659. Do you not think that it is your duty to apply ?—We think that it is the duty of the Government and the Municipality first, and subsequently it is ours.

A-1660. Do you take an active interest in the Municipality ?—Yes. We had our representative a few years back but ultimately we were deprived of that privilege and we are unrepresented in the Municipality to-day.

A-1661. You mean that you had a nominated representative before ?—There was a convention established by which Government used to ask us to elect one member who would be nominated on the Board by Government. That convention was established in one instance only though there was an indirect assurance that it would be continued further. We are unable to say why they discontinued it subsequently. Since the last three years we are unrepresented.

A-1662. You have about 60,000 workers with whom you have influence. Do you not think that the workers who are returned can influence the Municipality ?—At present the workers have some nominees in the Municipality.

A-1663. You cannot make use of them to get better facilities for you ?—They are amenable to the influence of the Labour Union, and they have already placed a scheme before the Municipality which is being considered at present.

A-1664. I take it that you are required to pay terminal taxes. Do you pay them chiefly on cotton coming to your mills ?—We pay taxes practically on every article that is consumed, including cotton, coal, stores, etc.

A-1665. But chiefly you pay on cotton ?—Yes.

A-1666. You pay a special water rate also, do you not ?—Yes.

A-1667. And you pay sanitary cess ?—Yes.

A-1668. You do not take any steps even as a body of millowners to see that you get a fair return for the terminal taxes, water rate and the sanitary cess you pay ?—We have been clamouring for years but nothing has been done by the Municipality. We pay about one-third of the total municipal revenues, about Rs. 8 lakhs in 28 lakhs.

A-1669. *Mr. Cliff*: May I know what the objects of your Association are ?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): Here is a copy of the rules and objects of our Association.

A-1670. Could you tell me whether the welfare of the work-people is one of the objects of your Association ?—It is.

A-1671. Could you tell me whether in pursuance of that object your Association has promoted any scheme for the welfare of the work-people ?—We had a welfare fund some time back—and which is still with us—but owing to certain reasons we are unable to use it; we have a welfare fund to the extent of 3 lakhs. We were giving a grant of Rs. 15,000 a year to the Labour Union for educational purposes.

A-1672. That, I understand, has now been stopped ?—Yes, because there was a difference of opinion. We told the Union to form a scheme and to have our members on the joint committee to conduct the schools. Because we pay our quota, we told them that we must have some voice in the management of the schools. The Union refused to accede to our suggestion and for that very reason we have stopped giving the grant.

A-1673. What is the balance in the fund to-day ?—It may be 3½ or 3¾ lakhs.

A-1674. How did you raise that fund ?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai): By a certain quota.

A-1675. By each millowner ?—Yes, according to the size of the mill.

A-1676. Are you now receiving any contribution to that fund ?—No; it was raised once only at a particular time.

A-1677. On one occasion a special fund was promoted ?—That is so.

A-1678. Might I ask you whether you have promoted any other scheme of welfare ?—(Mr. Chamanlal Parekh): No special scheme was promoted.

A-1679. Will you please look at the memorandum which you have submitted to the Commission and tell me whether in that memorandum there is any suggested change whereby the conditions of the work-people could be improved of which your Association approves ?—I am afraid I did not follow the question.

A-1680. I had an opportunity of reading this memorandum, as I hope you had, but I had great difficulty in finding any phrase in the memorandum putting forward any suggestion at all from your Association whereby the condition of the work-people

could be improved. I would like your assistance, and if you could tell me whether in this memorandum any suggestion is made towards that end I would be glad?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai): Of what type?

A-1681. The questions which have been put in respect of many subjects asked whether there is any possibility of improvement. I want you to take this memorandum if you will and to tell me where you suggest there is the slightest possibility of improving the conditions of the work-people engaged in the mills at Ahmedabad?—(Mr. Gordhandas Patel): We have already stated in the memorandum that a constitution exists between the Labour Union and the Association; that constitution definitely provides that any thought or suggestion about the improvement of labour or any complaint about the labour conditions in any of the mills should be immediately brought to the notice of the Association by the Union. As the point referred to by you is thus covered by the constitution which exists between the Union and the Association, we did not think it necessary to discuss that in our memorandum.

A-1682. Shall we go back for a moment? One of the objects of the Association is the promotion of welfare of the work-people. The reply is that there exists a constitution between this Association and the Union. I assume from that, that it was not found necessary to state in this memorandum any improvement which could be suggested. Is that correct?—Yes. The fact is that under the constitution even minor complaints are made, which are immediately attended to and redressed. We therefore did not think it necessary to make any separate suggestions.

A-1683. Shall we follow that a little further? One of the objects of the Association is the promotion of welfare of the work-people. Seeing that there is no improvement suggested in this memorandum, will you tell me what is the last suggestion you made to the Union for the improvement of the work-people?—The question of housing, improvement in education, improvement in crèches, the number of crèches to be increased in mills—these were discussed within the last six months between the Union and the Association.

A-1684. With what result?—The result is gradual. The mills have been more careful now in providing crèches. Certain accidents which took place in certain crèches were immediately brought to the notice of the mills and proper arrangements were made to avoid similar accidents in future.

A-1685. That is with regard to crèches. What have you done in other respects, say, with regard to education?—The Union conducts schools. With regard to drinking water complaints were made which were immediately brought to the notice of the Municipality and redressed.

A-1686. Complaints from whom?—Complaints from the Labour Union.

A-1687. I am confining myself to the employers' association and am endeavouring to find out in what respect the employers' association is carrying out one of its objects.—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai): The mills are increasing the number of crèches; the schools are increasing, and so on.

A-1688. With regard to prompt payment of wages did the Provincial Government ask you for your observations?—(Mr. G. Patel): We have already stated that the Provincial Government asked for the opinion of the Employers' Association with regard to that point.

A-1689. Could you tell me what they were?—As explained by our President, we gave it as our opinion that the present system was satisfactory and required no change.

A-1690. Sir Victor Sassoon was asking you about payment of wages weekly. I am now dealing with the subject of prompt payment of wages, i.e., payment of wages as early as possible after the day on which it falls due.—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas): We say that certain payments should be made only after certain number of days elapse after they fall due.

A-1691. How many days do you want?—8 to 10 days.

A-1692. Both in respect of time-work and piece-work?—Yes.

A-1693. Why do you want 8 to 10 days after the day on which it falls due?—We have to make calculations of the wages due to piece-workers.

A-1694. What period is necessary with regard to time-workers?—The same period, because paysheets are not made separately for piece-workers and time-workers. From blow room to spinning room certain workers are piece-workers and certain others are time-workers. We have to pay them all at the same time.

A-1695. Why do you want 8 days in the case of time-workers where there is no calculation to be made?—We have no such intricate calculations to make in the case of time-workers. But our object in delaying payment for 8 or 10 days is to

retain a certain amount of caution money in our hands. If we paid them in full settlement immediately after their wages fell due, they would have a tendency to change mills frequently. We would then have no permanent labour force. If on the other hand we had a certain number of days' wages as caution money there would be a check on that tendency.

A-1696. You want time to calculate the wages in the case of piece-workers and you want caution money in the case of both. Are there any other reasons?—No more.

A-1697. Of the two which is the more important?—It is more important for us to have some caution money to ensure a certain amount of continuity in our work-people.

A-1698. In your view that is the chief reason?—Yes.

A-1699. What was your reply to the Bombay Government with regard to fines?—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas). We have stated in our memorandum that fining exists to a negligible extent, that affairs are not so bad as they are described to be and therefore no action was called for.

A-1700. What is the maximum amount of fine for damaged work?—That depends on the nature of the damage. It may be one anna, or half anna or even quarter anna.

A-1701. Has your Association got any record of fines?—No.

A-1702. So you sent your observations to the Bombay Government in the absence of any record of fines?—Yes. But we discussed the matter in the Managing Committee which represents 20 to 25 mills.

A-1703. Did the Bombay Government ask you with regard to the amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Yes, we have sent our observations already.

A-1704. Will you tell me what they were?—I shall hand over a copy of our memorandum.

A-1705. Has your Association made any observation which is to the benefit of the worker? What are the alterations which you have recommended to be made in the Act?—(Mr. Patel). We have suggested that the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation should be given some discretion with regard to the number of days that should elapse before a workman gets compensation. In some cases there are several claimants in a family asking for compensation and the Commissioner should in such cases be given the discretion to withhold payment of cash for some time. We have also suggested that certain other classes of labour which are not included at present, might be included in the Act.

A-1706. In the Annual Report of the Union for 1928 it is stated that "cases of beating became so frequent at one time that the Union contemplated very drastic steps." Then it quotes a resolution of the Managing Committee of the Millowners' Association. Is that a resolution which the Managing Committee of your Association passed?—Yes.

A-1707. Has beating diminished since then?—Yes, certainly. (Mr. Patel). We have had no complaints. There is an award about beating and if there is any breach, a complaint is made and the matter is settled immediately.

A-1708. But your Managing Committee apparently viewed this as an evil when it went to the length of passing this resolution?—Yes.

A-1709. One of the objects of your Committee is to promote the welfare of the work-people. You say that has considerably diminished. But does it exist actually to-day or not?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai). It does not exist.

A-1710. But the Secretary of your Association says that you have had no complaint.—There are no complaints.

A-1711. Do any of the members of your Association keep a record of the sickness of the work-people?—No.

A-1712. But do any of the millowners pay sick wages?—Some of the mills may be paying sick wages according to the nature of the illness.

A-1713. Can you arrange for your Association to give us a record which will show the mills together with the number of work-people employed, which provide and to what extent in respect of housing medical facilities, crèches and schools?—Our printed list contains that information.

A-1714. But this document does not give the number of work-people?—No.

A-1715. Could you give me the information in relation to the work-people employer in each mill separately?—Yes, we are giving that information to the Government Inspector every month.

A-1716. What is the total amount spent on welfare per head of your people per annum ?
—We have no data.

A-1717. In your memorandum, in answering a good many questions as to what you do, this phrase: "Some do so and so" occurs. The whole implication of the memorandum is that the standard which some people maintain is used to the defence of the Association. Could you tell me what it costs the employers per head in welfare work covering the whole of the work-people in all the mills. (Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) I do not think we can do that, because the heads of our departments are looking after crèches and so on and it is impossible to put a money value on the services they render and say how much is spent on welfare work among the workers.

A-1718. I want to remind you that welfare of the work-people is one of the objects of your Association ?—Yes.

A-1719. Would it be possible for you to try and assist the Commission so that we might see what you spend per head of the working people ?—I shall try and do that.

A-1720. Is it the policy of your Association in view of the near advent of the Maternity Act, to reduce the number of women employed ?—No.

A-1721. Has your Association decided on any policy ?—No.

A-1722. So that if a Mill officer told me this morning that it was the policy at that mill to reduce the number of women because of the maternity benefit, what would you say about that ?—The Association is not aware of that. That is not the policy of the Association.

A-1723. Is that a right policy ?—No, that is not.

A-1724. *Divan Chaman Lal* : Could you tell me what efforts you have made to put into effect the recommendations of the Tariff Board with regard to the cotton textile industry ?—It would be convenient if you could specify the points on which you would like to have an answer.

A-1725. Have you carried out any improvements in organization of your industry on the lines recommended by the Tariff Board ? Could you oblige us by giving a statement as to the action you have taken in pursuance of the recommendations of the Tariff Board ?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai) We will try and do that.

A-1726. The report of the Tariff Board says that the mill industry in Ahmedabad is in a much better position than that in Bombay. Is that a fact ?—It is when compared to Bombay. The balance sheets are a proof of that.

A-1727. Are your wages lower than the wages paid in Bombay ?—No, they may be higher, but not less than Bombay.

A-1728. The Tariff Board have given statistics which show that Ahmedabad wages are definitely lower than Bombay wages ?—(Mr. Patel) That may be so according to the cost of living figures. But there is really no difference.

A-1728a. Take the manufacturing charge per loom. The Tariff Board says that it is Rs. 453·7 for Bombay and Rs. 450·29 for Ahmedabad. I shall now come to wages and show that the wages paid to spinners and weavers here are lower than those paid in Bombay. You find the high costs of labour referred to in page 109 of the Tariff Board Report. In August 1923 the monthly earnings of men in Bombay were Rs. 35-10-7 ; in Ahmedabad it was only Rs. 33-0-9. For women they were Rs. 17-5-5 in Bombay and Rs. 18-2-7 in Ahmedabad. The standard muster roll for 1926 (April 1st) gives the following figures for Bombay and Ahmedabad. Blow room tenters get Rs. 29 in Bombay and Rs. 23-10-0 in Ahmedabad ; card room tenters get Rs. 27-4-0 in Bombay and Rs. 24-7-6 in Ahmedabad. Frame tenters get Rs. 37-12-0 in Bombay and Rs. 29-6-0 in Ahmedabad. Ring frame side boys get Rs. 29-12-0 and Rs. 26-7-6 respectively. Winders get Rs. 21-4-0 and 23-1-0, respectively. They get a little more in Ahmedabad. Weavers get Rs. 47-12-0 and Rs. 47-15-9, a slight difference. Folders get Rs. 29 and Rs. 25-11-3, respectively. In the case of folders you have Rs. 4 in your favour. From what I have shown, could you not say that generally speaking the workers are paid better in Bombay than in Ahmedabad ?—No, if you took into consideration the cost of living. Moreover in the case of women your figures themselves show that we pay more than Bombay.

A-1728b. I am taking these actual figures given by the Tariff Board. Do you challenge them ?—No, we do not.

A-1728c. Again the production is the same in Ahmedabad and Bombay according to the Tariff Board. They say at page 121 that production is quite as much in Ahmedabad as in Bombay.

The Chairman : I do not quite see what you are leading up to.

Diwan Chaman Lall : In reply to a question from Sir Victor Sassoon it was stated that the mill industry in Ahmedabad was the best paid industry. I am trying to show that inspite of the fact that they are getting as large a production from their workers in Ahmedabad as they get in Bombay, they pay less wages in Ahmedabad than are paid in Bombay.—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*) : Sir Victor Sassoon asked whether the mill hands were better paid than the villagers. There was no comparison between the industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad or in any other place.

Mr. Cliff : They referred to other industries in Ahmedabad.

A-1728d. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you challenge the finding of the Tariff Board that production in Ahmedabad is quite the same as production in Bombay ?—We are not in a position to challenge or accept those findings unless we know on what materials they were based. They might have compared Bombay and Ahmedabad figures, but we have not the Bombay figures. Under the circumstances we cannot say, yes or no to that.

A-1728e. Could you tell me whether your industry is better paid than the Railway industry in Ahmedabad ?—No, we have no figures to compare.

A-1728f. How then did you say that your industry was better paid than any other industry ?—But we do not take Railways as an industry. Do you ?

Mr. Joshi : Railway workshops ?

The Chairman : The answer given by them referred to other industries which exist in Ahmedabad. I did not take it myself that it referred to a nation-wide industry such as Railways.

Mr. Cliff : Why then the witness also said that there was no other industry in Ahmedabad.

The Chairman : I think this is a kind of question on which we shall have to make up our minds.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I was trying to elicit some information if they could give statistical proof of it.

A-1729. You stated that 80 per cent. of your labour force was permanent. Would any permanent welfare schemes be feasible from the point of view of their permanency ?—If Government and the Municipality come forward with a scheme and bear a portion of the cost, we will be glad to bear our share of it. At the same time Government must not forget its duty to protect the industry right through.

A-1730. You are quite willing to pay your quota if Government and Municipalities come forward with schemes for the permanent benefit of the permanent labour force. But would it be feasible ?—Of course if the funds of the industry permit.

A-1731. I am eliminating all those factors. You see a great deal of absenteeism, going back to the villages and so on. You have 80 per cent. of your labour force permanent and your entire labour force is recruited within about 50 miles of Ahmedabad. Is any permanent scheme, for instance sickness insurance, feasible provided funds are forthcoming ?—That does not come in the way of the permanent labour force. As for that I may tell you we are improving our housing accommodation.

A-1732. Take unemployment. You say that you do not want public employment agencies. The Labour Union says in its report that their difficulty arises from the defects inherent in the prevailing system of employment, and that the only remedy is to replace it by an automatic labour exchange ?—We have discussed that matter. That is under consideration. But the union has not put forward any definite scheme.

A-1733. But for the moment you have decided that you do not want a labour exchange. We may modify that in the light of further schemes to be put forward by the labour union.

A-1734. With regard to unemployment insurance you also say that it is unnecessary. But you admit that there are dismissals and discharges and that large numbers of people are coming from the villages in search of work. Now there must be a certain amount of turnover of unemployment. Do you agree to that ?—That is very negligible.

A-1735. Have you seen the Bombay Strike Enquiry Committee's Report ?—Yes.

A-1736. In this report they have thrown out certain suggestions in anticipation of that the Labour Commission might or might not recommend, which are to be made applicable to the whole of the Bombay Presidency.

Sir Victor Sassoon : That is not correct. The Committee was making those suggestions only in cases where the industry was adopting rationalisation.

Diwan Chaman Lall : If a scheme like that were brought forward would you have any radical objections to that on principle ?—We cannot express an opinion unless a definite scheme is put forward.

A-1737. Is it not the right and duty of the State as well as the component parts of it including the employers to see to it that a man who is unemployed does not starve ?—Yes, I agree, it is for the State to do that.

A-1738. So that if the State realizes its responsibility and promulgates a scheme for relieving unemployment, will you, as Mr. Cliff reminded you, remembering that one of the objects of your Association is to promote the welfare of the workers, agree to work that scheme ?—If that State scheme apply to textile labour only we will oppose it.

A-1739. Irrespective of the fact that it is the duty of the State and the employers alike to see that an unemployed person does not starve ?—Yes. But if it is applied to the whole of the labouring classes including the agricultural classes and the middle classes, we will certainly support it.

A-1740. With regard to humidification, is your kata-thermometer system a success ?—To some extent it has been a success.

A-1741. Is the carrier system a success ?—Yes, to a certain extent. It is still under trial. It is being watched whether it is a paying proposition.

A-1742. In how many mills is the *kata* system in existence ?—It is in existence in all the mills. Under the Factories Act we have to maintain that.

A-1743. But is that working in all the mills ?—Yes, we have to send readings to Government every month.

A-1743a. Why do you say that it has been a partial success ?

The Chairman : The Kata-thermometer is not a system of humidification. It is only an instrument for registering temperatures.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I wanted to ascertain whether the system of registration is a success or not.—The Kata-thermometer is an instrument with wet and dry bulbs registering the humidity of the air. That is not a system of humidification.

A-1744. In how many mills have you got the carrier system ?—About ten or fifteen mills are equipped with these arrangements. They are all working partially successful.

A-1745. *Mr. Lallji* : Can you tell us what the return is on the whole of the capital invested in the textile industry ? What is the return you get ?—(Mr. Patel) : It was $3\frac{1}{2}$ in 1924 ; $4\frac{1}{10}$ in 1925 ; $4\frac{1}{4}$ in 1926 and $4\frac{1}{12}$ in 1927. With regard to the percentage on block account, the figures are as these.

A-1746. What would be a fair return on capital invested in trade generally ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : Between 8 and 9 per cent.

A-1747. Would it be fair to say that one-fourth of the population of Ahmedabad depends upon the textile industry for its living ?—Yes.

A-1748. Does this population pay municipal taxes, directly or indirectly ?—It does.

A-1749. Is it not the duty of the Municipality to provide for education, housing, and other things ?—Yes.

A-1750. Does the Municipality do so ?—No.

A-1751. Does the budget of the Municipality show a surplus ?—Yes.

A-1752. What does the Government do for the welfare of the workers in the textile industry ?—Nothing.

A-1753. What is the reason for the absence of a large number of men from work after pay days ?—Sometimes it is liquor, and sometimes they while away their time outside.

A-1754. If you were to make weekly payments, do you think there would be more absenteeism from those causes ?—Yes.

A-1755. You will admit that the houses of the labouring classes generally are very poor ?—(Mr. Parekh) : The old ones are, but the new houses are being built on a different style.

A-1756. How many new houses are being built ?—The number is increasing every year.

A-1757. Does the Municipality or the Government build them ?—No.

A-1758. Do you think if the mill labourer was more literate there would be less need to provide for medical aid ?—Yes.

A-1759. Have you asked Government to start free and compulsory primary education for the children of the labouring classes ?—(Mr. Patel) : Yes, I did so on behalf of the Association in the Council.

A-1760. *Mr. Cliff* : Did the Council pass a resolution ?—Yes. The scheme has been hanging fire for the last four years.

A-1761. *Mr. Lallji* : Do you know that the Bombay Government have not sufficient funds to help the scheme ?—That is what they say.

A-1762. What do you believe ?—We believe there is a good deal of scope for retrenchment in other directions.

A-1763. *Mr. Asavle* : Have you any scheme in mind whereby unemployment may be reduced ?—(Mr. Parekh) : There is so little unemployment here that we have not had any reason to consider any scheme.

A-1764. Do the piece-workers keep account of their work ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : There is a board at every loom on which the amount of work the workers do is recorded. The workers know the rates, and they can check the figures.

A-1765. Are more tenements at present required for the mill hands, or not ?—(Mr. Parekh) : Yes.

A-1766. Is it not a fact that when there is a strike in the mill industry the employers have always demanded that the houses occupied by workmen shall be vacated immediately ?—No, it is not so here.

A-1767. You have stated that the improvements which have been made in the erection of *chawls* for workmen since the last three years has produced a good moral effect on the workers. Was there previously a bad moral effect ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : It does not mean that. It should be "a better moral effect".

A-1768. You have stated that the physique of the workers is fairly good, but are not the mill workers always suffering from tuberculosis, phthisis and bronchitis ?—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas) : Not always. There may be some cases, as there are among other labouring classes.

A-1769. Do you not think more medical aid should be provided for the mill labourers ?—We are providing it, and there are also the hospitals.

A-1770. If a worker falls ill on Sunday or holidays, where can he get medical aid ?—He can go to the civil hospital.

A-1771. Is it open on Sundays and holidays ?—Yes.

A-1772. *Lady Nilkanth* : You say you make provision for drinking water. How is that provided ?—By storage tanks.

A-1773. You have *chatties* in every mill ?—Yes.

A-1774. You said that the Municipality does not provide any amenities to the mill people. May I know if there are municipal schools in mill areas or not ?—There are none suitable for the work-people.

A-1775. Is it your opinion that the mills get lesser amenities from the Municipality than the other population of the city ?—We think so.

A-1776. Do you think that if you were to provide welfare schemes for the benefit of the labourers you would have to spend so much that your profits would suffer ?—What kind of welfare schemes do you refer to ? Certainly if each mill were to build a separate hospital it will cost a lot.

A-1777. Let me put it this way. I exclude housing for the present. If your Association were to enforce on all the mills to have a special standard of welfare work, that is, *grèches*, medical health and provision for elementary education, do you think that it would involve great expenditure ?—(Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai) : It all depends upon the nature of expenses we are called upon to make.

A-1778. Do you think that all the mills stand in the same position with regard to this matter, or that some can afford and some cannot ?—All the mills, in our opinion, stand in the same situation.

A-1779. Do you think the Ahmedabad Municipality could undertake to house all your labourers ? As many of you have been Municipal Councillors yourselves, you know how far the Municipality can help. Do you think the whole burden should be taken up by the Municipality ?—Municipality and Government.

A-1780. *Miss Cama* : If serious accidents to workers occur in your mills where do you send them for medical treatment ?—To the civil hospital.

A-1781. Is that a private hospital or a Government one ?—It is Government.

A-1782. Do the millowners pay towards the maintenance of that hospital ?—We pay to one department, for training nurses. Some mills pay certain contributions.

A-1783. How many crèches are there in all the mills ?—(Mr. Gordhandas Patel): About 39.

A-1784. Will you call them good crèches ?—Of course, they are.

A-1785. *Miss Power* : What do you feel about the accuracy of the statement of the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad : “ With the legal prohibition of the presence of children in workrooms, the provision of some sort of a crèche becomes an unavoidable necessity. Satisfactory arrangements in this respect exist in 21 mills. In the other mills the attitude of the management is marked by culpable indifference. Enclosed in dirty rags or bits of hessian cloth, children of a very tender age are left in the mill compound under improvised and often precarious shelter with nobody to look after them. Establishments employing women should be compelled by legislation to make suitable arrangements for the children accompanying the women ”. Do you regard that description of conditions as an exaggeration ?—Yes.

A-1786. You were speaking before about the co-operation between the Millowners' Association and the Textile Labour Association and the fact that complaints came from the union to your Association. What machinery have you set up in your Association for dealing with those complaints speedily ?—We at once inform the mill which is concerned with the complaint.

A-1787. You may inform the mill that a complaint is made, but what arrangements are made for the speedy redress of the complaint ?—If the mill does not redress it we again remind it ; but if it is a serious complaint, we get it redressed by arbitration.

A-1788. If you look at the Textile Labour Association's report you will find they state that important grievances of which the redress would involve some outlay on the part of the mills are left to hang for years. They go on to say that they suggested to the Millowners' Association the appointment of a Joint Committee and a sub-arbitration board, but that it was regretted that you have failed to carry out these suggestions. What was your reason for failure to comply with the suggestion of the labour union ?—(Mr. Shantilal Mangaldas) : We do not think that is necessary, because even now as it is we always come to a conclusion. If there is any dispute we notify the Secretary of the labour union, and we solve the problem between ourselves. But if it is very grave it goes to the permanent board of arbitrators. A sub-committee of arbitrators cannot serve the purpose because the millowners as well as the labour will not have the same confidence as they have in the permanent arbitrators.

A-1789. They also say that 50 complaints are outstanding from the year 1922 and 78 from the year 1923 ?—Complaints are always bound to come. (Mr. Gordhandas Patel): These complaints, I think, refer to the provision of dining sheds. There was a complaint that each mill should provide a dining shed. But on account of the difficulty of space and the permission to be received from the Municipality certain mills are not in a position to build dining sheds.

A-1790. If you add up the number of complaints outstanding since 1922, I imagine that there must be far more than would be covered by those involving big structural suggestions of the kind you have made just now which, I admit, do involve delay. Some of these complaints must be in respect of matters which could be put right more quickly ?—Some complaints were about the arrangements for drinking water, and they were set right.

A-1791. Are we to take it that the suggestion of the trade union to have this joint committee has been definitely turned down by your Association ?—Yes because we think there is no necessity to have such a joint committee. The present arrangement is very elastic ; as soon as a complaint is made, the authorities of the Association and the Union go to the mill concerned and try to redress it ; if it is not redressed, then it comes to the Committee, and finally goes to the Arbitration Board.

A-1792. Would your Association be in favour of Statutory orders laying down minimum welfare regulations which should have the force of law such as are operative in Great Britain ?—Not at present.

A-1793. Why not ?—Unless we consider all the details and the cost involved in carrying out the scheme, it will not be proper for us to give an off-hand opinion ; we have to consider how far it will affect the cost of production also.

A-1794. I am talking about the principle of passing such orders, not about any definite regulations which would be made under them?—We are not prepared to commit ourselves even as far as the principle is concerned.

A-1795. *Mr. Joshi*: You state you are willing to co-operate with the Municipality as regards housing. May I ask whether you would be willing to pay more and reasonable taxes as your contribution towards the solution of the housing problem if the Municipality agrees to do something in the matter?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*): If there is further protection given to the industry.

A-1796. Am I to understand that if Government puts more money into your pocket you will spend a share of it in this direction?—No. The industry is now depressed, and as long as funds do not permit, we cannot do anything.

A-1797. You say that the percentage of absenteeism is about 3 per cent. on the average. Therefore you can have no complaint about absenteeism. Yet I see in another part of your memorandum you say that absenteeism is due to illiteracy and indolent habits. Why do you call your people indolent if there is only 3 per cent. of absenteeism among them? What is the general efficiency figure in Ahmedabad in the weaving department?—From 70 to 80 per cent.

A-1798. May I take it that your workmen work for ten hours intensively during the day?—They do seven hours' work.

A-1799. If a man works seven hours intensively near a machine, can he be called indolent?—No, "Indolent" means absence without reason.

A-1800. Do you know what is the general percentage of absenteeism amongst better-class people, say, Government servants?—No.

A-1801. I will tell you. Government provides generally 10 per cent. for leave reserve. How can you call a man indolent when his absenteeism is only 3 per cent., while the Government provides 10 per cent. leave reserve for its servants. Suppose you were asked to work seven hours a day continuously without a minute's rest?—It is not without a minute's rest. The men are at the machines for ten hours, but they come out every ten or fifteen minutes during every hour.

A-1802. I am taking your efficiency figure of 70 to 80 per cent., which means that your work-people give you continuous work for seven hours?—Not continuous.

A-1803. Have you any objection to the Government ratifying the Convention regarding the provision of statistics of unemployment?—(*Mr. Patel*): We have no objection to that.

A-1804. You state that unemployment in the textile industry is negligible. I suppose you mean from the point of view of the whole industry; but what about the individual worker? You do not mean to say that, for instance, ten days' unemployment is of no consequence to an individual worker?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*): We do not admit that he is unemployed for ten days.

A-1805. Does it happen in Ahmedabad that certain departments of certain mills are closed for some days?—Very rarely.

A-1806. Does every Department of every mill continue working for the whole year?—Yes.

A-1807. Do you put up notices as regards piece-rates in your mills?—Yes.

A-1808. Would you have any objection to putting a section in the Factories Act, making that compulsory?—(*Mr. Parekh*): No.

A-1809. Would you have any objection to making the provision of cooling plants compulsory by legislation?—Yes.

A-1810. Why?—Because some of the old mills are not suitable for such an installation.

A-1811. Would you object to its being made compulsory for new mills?—(*Mr. Sakarlal Balabhai*): It is under trial still; it is not decided yet whether it is a paying proposition, so we cannot commit ourselves.

A-1812. You say "Sickness insurance and introducing of similar systems are neither suitable nor necessary under the existing conditions. Difficulties arising from non-acceptability of Western medicines, paucity of medical men, migration of labour, and finance are not found in Ahmedabad". As you do not seem to have any difficulties as regards sickness insurance, why are you against it?—Because it is not workable.

A-1813. On the other hand, there is no difficulty about finance or about people taking Western medicines. You also admit that there is no paucity of medical men, or about

the labour being migratory. These are the difficulties which are usually put forward against the introduction of sickness insurance, but you state that these difficulties do not exist here, therefore what difficulties are there against sickness insurance?—Epidemics.

A-1814. Despite epidemics life insurance companies in India are prospering, are they not?—We do not say that life insurance companies are prospering.

A-1815. You will admit that there are people who insure their life in India in spite of epidemics?—Yes.

A-1816. Do you admit that during sickness, work-people do not receive any pay, and therefore incur debts during that period?—It has not been brought to our notice.

A-1817. Is it not your business to enquire about the welfare of your men?—Our business covers welfare work of all types.

A-1818. As employers you never worry as to what happens to your work-people during sickness?—(Mr. Patel) We provide medical aid and dispensaries. Beyond that we cannot do anything.

A-1819. With regard to provision for old age, you say this would be desirable, but you do not want to make such provision simply because your people are vicious, they drink, they eat opium and they gamble. May I ask if there are any members of your Association who subscribe to *pinjrapole*—towards the maintenance of lame and old cattle? If you do, do you think there is anything wrong in making provision for old people even though they may be opium eaters or drinkers or gamblers?—(Mr. Sakarlal Ballabhai) It is the duty of all men to look after the old and lame.

A-1820. *Mr. Joshi*: You state that the workmen's compensation law throws some financial burden upon the industry, and you mention Rs. 800 per mill of 25,000 spindles and 500 looms. How does that compare with the total expenditure?—(Mr. Parekh) It is very negligible.

A-1821. So that the cost of the workmen's compensation law need not be considered?—Not by itself; but the cost of these various things together comes to a big sum.

A-1822. *Mr. Clow*: How many mills are in all working on night shift?—Four or five.

A-1823. Is the tendency to increase the number of night shifts?—It has decreased by 50 per cent. during the last six months.

A-1824. Why is that?—Because it does not pay to run a night shift.

A-1825. If it does not pay why are new mills being erected?—Because we think that by building new mills, with new machines and up-to-date improvements they will pay better than the old mills. We have no other trade in Ahmedabad and we are investing our capital in these new mills in order to try and overcome our present difficulties.

A-1826. In your memorandum you complain of the competition of Indian States. What States are you thinking of?—The surrounding States, especially Baroda and Indore.

A-1827. If there are advantages to be derived from placing mills in Indian States why does not the new capital find an outlet there instead of in Ahmedabad?—We are more centralized here, and the mill agents are able to look after both the old mills and the new mills which are being erected.

A-1828. As regards the managing agency system, do I understand that the managing agent raises the capital from private persons, and distributes part of the commission as a kind of dividend?—Suppose I am a partner in the managing firm, I subscribe to the extent of a lakh of rupees. I go to my friends and ask them to subscribe a proportion, and out of that lakh of rupees I hand over to them their share. I take whatever balance remains. In other words, I underwrite.

A-1829. And you get a part of the annual commission?—Yes.

A-1830. Is every mill here managed by a managing agency?—Yes. There is no exception.

A-1831. Why is it not possible to manage mills more directly by a Board of Directors and a managing director without the intervention of managing agents?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai) Because it is very difficult to obtain the capital. The capital is brought in by the managing agent, and unless it is forthcoming no mill can be established or run.

A-1832. Do you consider the present age of children as fixed by the Factories Act suitable? Do you not think 15 is rather young as a full time worker?—No.

A-1833. As regards absenteeism, I understand that you only show absenteeism if a man is absent without having supplied a substitute?—Yes.

A-1834. If he supplies a substitute, you do not mark him as absent?—That is so.

A-1835. Suppose you marked him as absent whenever he was not there himself, what would be the percentage of absenteeism then?—About 2 per cent. more.

A-1836. We noticed during our inspection of the mills that there seemed to be very few old men working. At about what age does a man cease work?—They may go to their villages in their old age.

A-1837. Is a great proportion of the labour permanent here?—When they go away they go back to their villages.

A-1838. Are all the weaving sheds working on the two loom system here—one man to two looms?—Yes.

A-1839. You have not tried working more?—No.

A-1840. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In regard to the *chawls* which some of the mill-owners have built here, has any statement been worked out as to what return the mill-owners get on the capital invested?—(Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai) Yes, it is three per cent.

A-1841. What is the rate at which you borrow money for the purpose of building these *chawls*?—6 per cent.

A-1842. So that there is a clear loss of three per cent. on the housing accommodation given to the workers?—That is so.

A-1843. You say that the number of women workers has been greatly reduced in the Ahmedabad cotton mills during the last two years. What is the reason that has led to this reduction in the employment of women workers?—(Mr. Patel) There has been a tendency on the part of labour unions to say that women workers ought not to work in the mills.

A-1844. The mill-owners themselves have not discouraged the employment of women?—No.

A-1845. They would employ women as before, if the women were willing to come?—Yes.

A-1846. That leads me to my next question. Are the earnings of the men members of the family enough to maintain the whole family including the women? Do you maintain that a family can live in comfort on the earnings of the man, taking a family as being one male, one female and two children?—The women may be going to other work in the city.

A-1847. That means that there are other sources of employment in Ahmedabad for women?—That is so.

A-1848. That is the reason why there is no unemployment in the city?—Exactly.

A-1849. *Mr. Asarle*: What are those other sources of employment?—Hawking of vegetables, plying of lorry, road repairs, and several other things.

A-1850. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You say that the restriction of 60 hours has produced a good effect on the operatives but that it has increased the cost of production in the industry. Later on you say “No further reduction in the hours of working should be made. Workmen get sufficient time after 6 p.m. when the mills are closed, for recreation and rest. The period of rest in the afternoon is one hour at a stroke, and this also tends to give them sufficient rest during the interval.” You then go on to say “Further reduction in working hours would enhance the cost of production to such a degree as would harm the industry and render its position to compete with other manufacturers very weak.” What has been the effect on production of the reduction of the working hours from 12 to 10? Can you give us any statement which would show that a given number of workmen were producing so much in 12 hours, and that they are now producing so much in ten hours?—(Mr. Parekh) We will make out a statement.

A-1851. I notice you say “and render its position to compete with other manufacturers very weak.” To what other manufacturers are you referring?—Manufacturers outside India—Japan mostly.

A-1852. Then your position is that any measures of this kind will so adversely affect the industry that it will suffer heavily in consequence of foreign competition?—Exactly.

A-1853. You say “Labour questions are increasingly handled by Government, and during the last six years several enactments have been made—the Workmen’s Compensation Act, Trade Disputes Act, Trade Unions Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Humidification and Ventilation Rules” and so on. Can you tell us what has been the cumulative effect

of these measures, on the textile industry and also what the effect will be in future if further measures of a similar kind are adopted ?—We will try to submit a statement to you on that.

A-1854. *The Chairman* : I may take it from your memorandum that you have generally found that the changes made in recent years have been for the benefit of your workers, and that you have not been exactly ruined by them ?—No, not ruined, but we have been affected to a certain extent.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
NINETEENTH MEETING
AHMEDABAD

Saturday, 16th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*),

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVAS A. SASTRI,
 C.H., P.C.
 Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
 Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
 C.I.E.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
 Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
 Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
 (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOUSEINBOHY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
 Mr. R. S. ASAYLE, M.L.C.

Lady V. R. NILKANTH. } *Lady Assessors.*
 Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
 Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. AMBALAL SARABHAI of The Ahmedabad Manufacturing and
 Calico Printing Co., Ltd.**

A-1855. *The Chairman* : I understand that you are the owner of two large mills in Ahmedabad ?—I am the senior partner in the firm of managing agents.

A-1856. Of the Calico and the Jubilee Mills ?—Yes.

A-1857. You yourself are responsible for the control and management here of those mills ?—That is so.

A-1858. How many workers do you employ in these two mills ?—About 5,000.

A-1859. Are those divided between the two mills equally ?—In one mill we have about 3,000 and in the other mill about 2,000.

A-1860. And you yourself give your personal attention to the control of those two important mills ?—I control the management.

A-1861. In your memorandum you tell us that you are making an experiment in the appointment of an employment officer to get over some of the difficulties that we often hear of in the recruitment of labour in your mills, and you tell us quite frankly of some of the difficulties which you have found in that experiment to diminish the difficulties that sometimes arise in leaving complete responsibility for engagement of labour to the jobbers ?—That is so.

A-1862. You tell us, as might be expected in such an experiment, that considerable difficulties arise ?—That is so.

A-1863. May I take it that you are persisting in that experiment and hoping that experience will help you to make it satisfactory ?—I have no doubt about it.

A-1864. You have no doubt that it will succeed ?—It will take some time, but it is bound to succeed.

A-1865. With patient perseverance you feel that it will succeed and you will get over many of the difficulties of the system which is so common ?—That is my view.

A-1866. Do you keep any complete register of the workers who come to your firm?—Yes; those who are employed are entered on a waiting list, and then whenever there is a vacancy a selection is made from those on the waiting list.

A-1867. Where you have migratory labourers coming in from the outside, do they return again and again to your works, or is there any record to show how frequently they return to the same works?—There are not many names registered so far, because, people who are not supported by jobbers are afraid of getting their names registered, because if they get employment they are afraid they will be sent away from some excuse or another; so that the list is not very comprehensive or complete; but we get a few men and they keep on coming to us from time to time and get employment as substitutes.

A-1868. Do you aim at giving encouragement to these migratory labourers to come again and again to your works?—Yes, by employing them whenever we need them.

A-1869. When they come back do you give a preference to those who have worked with you before?—We always do.

A-1870. And do you give any inducement to them tending towards regularity in that respect?—In certain departments we pay attendance bonus, but not for people who go away for a short period and then come back; they do not get any inducement at all.

A-1871. In your memorandum you deal with the question of unemployment insurance and you tell us that in your opinion it is unnecessary and uncalled for, that in your view it could only be possible if it covered a larger field than merely industrial workers?—That is so.

A-1872. You then make an interesting reference to the use of men of University education?—We are making an experiment in that way.

A-1873. Are you finding that men from the Universities are in an increasing measure turning their thoughts towards industrial employment?—I think so.

A-1874. That would seem to be a very valuable development. We have heard something of it elsewhere. You are doing your best. I take it, to encourage young men of University qualifications to apply their abilities to industry?—We get a number of applications, so that I feel that they like to go into technical lines now.

A-1875. And so far as your experiment has gone has it been successful?—I am quite satisfied with it.

A-1876. You have already some men of that type who are proving themselves capable and satisfactory?—Yes, that is my experience.

A-1877. I think I may take it from what you tell us that you have an advantage here in Ahmedabad that for the most part the real heads of the firms are on the spot dealing from day to day with their problems?—That is so.

A-1878. Not at a distance?—They are in close touch with the management.

A-1879. That accounts, perhaps, for some of the success of your experiments. You tell us that a few graduates were taken as apprentices in 1919 and a regular scheme was introduced in 1921. At present in your mills there are 12 graduates in the technical departments and 10 in the commercial department?—That is so.

A-1880. We take note of that as a valuable experiment of which I take it you are confident there will come success?—I think so.

A-1881. You also tell us in more details of your experiments to deal with your workers and to eliminate some of the troubles that have arisen from leaving too much responsibility to the jobbers?—But our efforts have not been successful, as I have stated.

A-1882. So I note; you tell us an attempt was made to do without jobbers, but the system was too novel and it had to be given up?—That is so.

A-1883. But I take it that your experiment with the employment officer, while it is not aimed at altogether doing away with the jobber, is intended to remove the evils which sometimes grow up where the jobbers are not men of the right quality?—Yes, that is one of the objects.

A-1884. You make a reference to workers committees, you tell us there can be no objection on principle to the formation of workers committees, but you tell us that there is suspicion and distrust on both sides. Would you like to develop your views on the possibility of workers committees?—The union do not view with favour any workers committee; I have discussed it with the Labour Union, and they think that it will come in conflict with their shop stewards, they think it will interfere with the Union movement and divide the workers. That is one objection of the Union. The second objection

is that the Board and I realize that if we give some advisory functions to the committee to begin with, they will ask for some further concessions, they will want an effective voice in management a little later, and it may lead to labour troubles.

A-1885. You are aware, no doubt, that this experience of yours is not one which refers to India alone; the same suspicion has occurred in other countries in the early stages of such a proposal as this, but that with patience both the union and the employers come to see that there is a field for joint works committees without any weakening of the union and to the advantage of both labour and employers?—That is my view, and on principle I approve of it; but I do not think the union movement and the employers are in a condition to work this system at present until the union movement has more settled in the country; until then I do not think it is possible to work it without disastrous results to both.

A-1886. But a movement of that kind cannot make progress except with patient endeavour on both sides to make it a success; it needs, of course, to be established with the approval and co-operation of the union and of the employers?—The difficulty to-day is that only spinners are in the union; there is no union for weavers, I mean not on a large scale. There are very few men in the weavers union. So that when we have got a certain number of workers in the union, and in other departments not in the union, we are not able to discuss questions of general importance, such as intervals for food, fines and other things, because those who are in the union will want to advocate the policy of the union, and those who are not in the union may want something else. So that unless we get all the workers in the union, I am afraid this experiment will not succeed.

A-1887. Then you think it needs more complete organization on the workers' side before there is a basis for real success?—That is what I think.

A-1888. In your memorandum you tell us some interesting things about housing arrangements; can you tell us in a few words what in your opinion is the main obstacle to an improvement of the housing conditions in Ahmedabad?—Want of will.

A-1889. On whose part?—On the part of all.

A-1890. In that you include the Municipality, the employers and public opinion generally?—The workers, employers, Municipality and Government.

A-1891. Have you any suggestion to give us as to how those obstacles can be overcome?—By the Municipality undertaking big housing schemes, in my opinion, or subsidising a housing scheme. We are considering such a proposal in the Municipality at present.

A-1892. Taking for the moment the housing for which the millowners are responsible, we notice a very great variation between the best and the worst; is it not possible for the millowners to try to level up the worst to the standard of the best for the credit of the industry here?—My own view is that it is not a function of a millowner to provide houses for his workers; it is the function of the public body to do so. The millowners may pay their contribution to the local body for the purpose; millowners may be taxed to provide interest and sinking fund and other things, but there cannot be uniformity if every employer builds separately; it must be done by the local body.

A-1893. But am I right in saying that you yourself have done a great deal in the way of housing of your own workers?—We have done very little, and I do not think we can do much in that direction.

A-1894. And the union, I understand, prefer municipal housing to employers' housing for certain obvious reasons?—At present I do not think they care who builds their houses as long as the houses are built.

A-1895. But do you not think that the employers as a whole, who have considerable numbers of *chawls*, could raise the standard, bring up the poor ones to the standard of the best?—I think it ought to be done; the municipality ought to enforce it not only on the employers but on all *chawl* owners, whether the *chawls* belong to the mills or to private landlords.

A-1896. Then do you think the municipal regulations are not adequate or that they are not adequately enforced?—Both. I have stated that.

A-1897. I understand that recently a new standard has been introduced into the municipal regulations?—That only prevents back to back rooms; that is the new regulation, as far as I am aware; but there are many more things that require to be done in this direction.

A-1898. Then you think that a higher standard of municipal regulations is required?—It is very necessary.

A-1899. And, more than that, a greater determination to enforce that standard ?—That is so.

A-1900. *Mr. Sastri* : Taking up this housing question, did I understand you to say that you do not consider it is the duty of the millowners to provide accommodation for their employers ?—What I say is this, that the millowners may contribute, but not at their own expense provide land, build houses and so on.

A-1901. Then you consider the municipalities are the proper agencies to take up the matter ?—That is so.

A-1902. Would you say that the municipalities should finance these housing schemes out of the ratepayers' contributions, or would you allow that while the municipalities may be the managing agencies for building and so on, they should recoup themselves out of contributions made by the millowners in this behalf ?—In the present financial position of the municipality, they will have to get it from the millowners ; the difference between the economic rent and the rent that the workers can actually pay will have to be borne by the millowners.

A-1903. Then the municipalities will build and also regulate building by private enterprise, so that there may not be great disparity between the standards set up by the municipalities and by these private builders ?—No attempt has been made by the municipality so far and it is difficult. I personally do not favour the municipality building them ; the municipality should subsidize private owners and the workers to build houses. To begin with, the municipality should build a few, and then offer a subsidy to the workers and then to the landlords on different grades. Then we must see what the result is, and then adopt the policy we find best under the circumstances.

A-1904. Do you look forward to the occupiers of these houses being able to pay economic rents ?—Some workers can, some cannot.

A-1905. And I suppose those who cannot, comprise the great majority ?—The rent will have to be less than the economic rent.

A-1906. Do you say that wages should be increased so as to enable these people to pay the rents ?—That brings up a very big question.

A-1907. Otherwise I think there is a risk of the ratepayer being taxed for the purpose of housing these labourers ?—My information is to the effect that Rs. 60,000 per year is the total that the municipality should require for the purpose, and that they can certainly get from the mills.

A-1908. Now we come to something definite. You think the mills here can bear the additional burden. I am not asking you yet whether they will bear it. You think they can bear it ?—My own view is that they ought to.

A-1909. I suppose you are one of the few who hold that opinion among your class ?—I do not know that.

A-1910. With regard to hours of work, are you in sympathy with the demand that they should be reduced as low as 8 ? I am not asking you as a humanitarian ; I am asking you whether you favour the demand as a practical thing at the present time, and, if you do not, will you kindly explain your reasons to the Commission ?—I do not think it is possible to do it in the near future. If we reduce hours the rates of wages will have to be put up by 25 per cent. in order that their present earning should be maintained. I believe that the workers can certainly do considerably more than they do at present and earn more, but they will not agree to it to-day. If the hours are reduced without doing either, then the industry cannot bear the charge.

A-1911. Will you explain a little further why there is this reluctance on the part of labour to increase their output ?—Their standard of living is low and on the present wage they do not feel the pinch that is required in order to give them an impetus to earn more. That is one thing ; the second thing is that they are afraid of unemployment ; they feel that if they take up more work it means unemployment for the other people. The third reason is that their home surroundings, education and so on, are so low that they do not realize the benefit of it. We have tried an experiment for about a year ; we worked 8 hours, and we had naturally at that time to ask our workers to attend more to their work than they had with 10 hours' work. We found our workers wanted to go back to 10 hours and be more lenient than to work 8 hours.

A-1912. They would rather work 10 hours loosely than work 8 hours rigorously ?—That is what we were told by the workers some time ago when we were working 8 hours.

A-1913. Do you think that defect in labour can be cured or combated by any means?—Yes, I have made a suggestion in my written evidence with regard to unemployment. There are so many new mills being put up just now ; some mills do night work and others would like to do night work if they could get the men. If the union agrees not to make any more members and these men who are working in the mills are found work in new mills, then it can be done in such a way that in a few years it will mean more work without unemployment.

A-1914. Are the union prepared to restrict their membership?—They cannot possibly do it until the millowners agree not to employ non-union men.

A-1915. So that very good understanding between millowners and operatives would be required?—Yes, and that is why I think it is not possible.

A-1916. Do you think it is worth while making an attempt?—It will not succeed at the present time.

A-1917. We heard some days ago here that the difficulties of labour are in part due to the fact that the managing agents appropriated to themselves a somewhat undue share of the profits of the industry. Have you anything to say on that head?—There are some people who believe that the Ahmedabad mill agents get more than Bombay, but I have looked into the figures and I find that is not so. I have figures which I have given to the Tariff Board showing a comparison between the charges on the mills in respect of the agency in Ahmedabad and Bombay. I find that Ahmedabad mill agents do not get more. I mean the charge on the mill is not more ; they may be getting slightly more but the mill does not pay more.

A-1918. Then from whom do they get the excess?—The Ahmedabad mill agents do many things which the Bombay mill agents do not do, for instance, selling ; the Ahmedabad mill agents give more attention to it and pay a lower commission to their selling agents than they do in Bombay. I made a comparison of a mill with 25,000 spindles and 825 looms, and I found that in a lean year in Ahmedabad the charge is Rs. 3,000 per year more, but in a good year in Ahmedabad it is less by Rs. 4,000 than it is in Bombay. Then the Ahmedabad mill agents are large shareholders in the companies, so that if they were not taking it as commission they would get it as dividend. For this purpose I have not taken that into account ; if that were taken into account, it would come to much less than Bombay.

A-1919. So that you think on the whole that the proportion of profit that the managing agents take is not susceptible of much reduction?—If it is reduced the industry will not succeed as well as it does in Ahmedabad. One of the reasons why the industry has made such progress here is that the agent has a great stake in the capital and he makes a good profit on it.

A-1920. He puts more work into the business?—That is so ; he has such a great stake in it.

A-1921. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Yesterday we were informed that the profits on the block account of the Ahmedabad mills come to about 4 per cent. Is that true?—Very nearly.

A-1922. Then how is it that you are able to declare dividends on a much higher scale?—Because of the reserves in the depreciation funds and the undistributed profits. The capital is a very small part of the total funds of the company. The Ahmedabad mills work with a smaller capital ; they take greater risks in the beginning ; that is why the dividends are high.

A-1923. But the dividends must come out of profits. In a statement that has been circulated to us it is stated that the average dividend was 18 per cent., after providing about 35 lakhs for depreciation and about the same amount as managing agents' commission. If you only make 4 per cent. on the block account, which is the capital invested in machinery and buildings, how is it possible to call that industry a success?—The return is very inadequate but the dividend can be explained. If the capital is 20 lakhs and the reserves are 80 lakhs, then 4 per cent. on the total will come to 20 per cent. on 20 lakhs. It is not satisfactory, but it is not as unsatisfactory as in other places. It is because of the reserves and other things that the dividends are maintained. The reserves are not usually deposited but are invested in machinery and buildings ; most of the mills invest their reserves and depreciation fund in extending the mills, so that on the block account it is a very poor return.

A-1924. *The Chairman* : You mean that the nominal capital of the company may represent only a quarter of the money that is really sunk in the industry?—In many cases less than a quarter.

A-1925. So that the 18 per cent. on the nominal capital has really no relation to the percentage of the profit on the whole of the money sunk in buildings and machinery?—That is so; it is a very poor return.

A-1926. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What would be the position of a new mill?—A new mill with up-to-date machinery will earn more than 4 per cent. now.

A-1927. You appreciate that unless the return was something in the nature of 6 per cent. there would be a loss to the company, as they would be paying out more in interest than they received in profit?—Yes; it will pay more than 6 per cent., but how much I must work out.

A-1928. *The Chairman*: May I take it that a new mill at any rate anticipates say 10 per cent., or else the enterprise would hardly be justified in taking the risk?—It certainly anticipates 10 per cent. on the paid-up capital, not on the block. If a company has a block capital of 20 lakhs, of which the paid-up capital is 5 lakhs, and the profit is 2 lakhs, that is 10 per cent.

A-1929. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Assuming an old mill is making 4 per cent., with the same management, what would a new mill make?—As it was about two months ago, I think it would make about 8 per cent. which is double.

A-1930. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What do you mean by the following remark in your memorandum:—"Moreover, one country cannot reduce its hours while another country competing in its home and foreign markets does not do so, unless it has the independence to adjust its tariffs and pay bounties as may be necessary to make up for what may be lost by reduction in the hours of working and by improving generally the condition of workers"?—I had in mind Japan, where the hours of work are much longer than they are here; and wages I think work out less than they are here in certain departments; so that I think unless we have fiscal independence with regard to tariffs and other things it will ruin the industry. In foreign countries we cannot compete at all and we find it very difficult to hold our own in India to-day.

A-1931. What do you mean by what you say in your written memorandum with regard to the attitude of Government towards trade combinations and industrial disputes?—I had in mind what Government did in Bombay at the time of the Bombay mill strike and communal riots. As to what I say as to acts of commission and omission on the part of the Government, I can only mention a few. We are told that everything is held up for want of money, but look at the expenditure on New Delhi.

A-1932. That is the Imperial Government; I am speaking of the Provincial Government?—Because the Imperial Government have not got money, they cannot stop the provincial contributions, and the provinces cannot give us money for improvements because they have to make contributions to the Imperial Government. Bombay lost heavily with regard to the development scheme and could not balance their budget. Look at the expense, in a poor country like India, of keeping body-guards, maintaining the pomp of the Moghuls, and special trains, when hospitals have not got bandages, and people cannot be educated. Then the rate of exchange of the rupee at 1s. 6d. instead of 1s. 4d. has, in my opinion, ruined the country a great deal. With regard to omission, what is being done about land policy, education and public health?

A-1933. Housing is closely connected with public health, is it not?—Yes.

A-1934. In every town where a municipality exists, it is the duty of the municipality to look after public health?—That is so.

A-1935. Therefore the first duty of a municipality is to see that all the sanitary measures which are required for public health are taken by it at the expense of the general rate-payer?—Yes.

A-1936. How has the municipality discharged its duty in Ahmedabad in regard to public health?—Very badly.

A-1937. What is the total municipal revenue in Ahmedabad?—I think it is about 35 lakhs.

A-1938. And what is the population?—They do not keep proper statistics, but I think it is about 3,20,000.

A-1939. So that roughly speaking the incidence of taxation per head of population is Rs. 11?—Rs. 9.

A-1940. In Bombay it is nearly Rs. 28, is it not?—Rs. 22 or Rs. 23.

A-1941. That means that there is a great disparity between the municipal taxation on the population of Bombay and on that of Ahmedabad?—Yes. Karachi is about Rs. 16. Our Rs. 9 includes about one-third or one-quarter coming from the mills, so that it comes to less on the rest of the population.

A-1942. There is no obligation upon the municipality to build houses for the people ?—I think it is the function of the municipality to bring down mortality.

A-1943. Their obligatory duties include medical relief, general sanitation and building regulations to ensure that buildings are constructed in a sanitary manner by the owners, but I have never known there is any obligation on the municipality to build houses themselves ?—I think local bodies in England give subsidies and help. I am asking for an all round extension of the housing programme, but in so far as it affects the mill hands, that amount may be recovered from the mills in additional taxation.

A-1944. Your position is this, that the provision of sanitary houses by private enterprise is not possible, as it does not pay, and therefore public bodies and Government should subsidize the building of houses ?—That is so.

A-1945. Do you think the general public would be able to bear the burden of this additional taxation ?—As far as the mill housing is concerned.

A-1946. I am speaking with regard to the whole population ?—But it may be put in such a way that the general public will not grumble about it.

A-1947. You think it is a practical proposition ?—I think so.

A-1948. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum, you refer to the landed interest being strongly represented on the Municipal Board ?—That is so.

A-1949. Most of the mill hands are at present enfranchised ?—Yes, they are.

A-1950. Are not they able to secure effective representation ?—The landlords in whose *chawls* they stay manage to get their votes.

A-1951. Have you any suggestions for overcoming that difficulty ?—Civic consciousness.

A-1952. But that is not a thing one can build up in a day ?—We shall have to wait till it comes.

A-1953. You have no shorter method to suggest ?—Government can come down and say: "You shall do this to improve sanitation and housing"; but they do not.

A-1954. That would be rather interfering with local self-government, would it not ?—I think they interfere where they ought not to and do not interfere where they ought to.

A-1955. Under the head "Value and defects of system of employing jobbers" you refer to your endeavours to get the educated young men to replace jobbers, and you say there is great difficulty, as the nature of the work appeals only to a few. What is the scale of pay that a young man can expect on entering that occupation ?—We have tried it and many left us; I wanted them to learn the work to begin with. A jobber will get about Rs. 120 a month after he has been trained for a year or two.

A-1956. During his training what would you give him ?—We offered to pay Rs. 30 as a sort of scholarship, but then the work does not appeal to them.

A-1957. Why—because it is manual ?—They are not used to these long hours and this class of work and the conditions in the mill.

A-1958. In your memorandum under the head "Value and defects of system of employing jobbers" you refer to surplus labour at present, but I think in answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that the difficulty of working nightshifts was that you could not get enough labour—Not the right type of labour! those who get employment during the day time do not prefer to work in the night, and the people you get at night are indifferent work-people. It is only those who cannot get day work who take night work.

A-1959. The mills in which working conditions are good have much less difficulty in getting the labour they want ?—That is so.

A-1960. Are the mills in which conditions are poor compelled to offer higher wages ?—I have no personal knowledge of that; if they do not pay higher wages they will get an inferior class of men.

A-1961. You refer to objections urged by the labour union against doing without jobbers. What is the nature of these objections ?—They have got the jobbers in the union now and they have got to support them.

A-1962. You have made an interesting suggestion as regards workmen's compensation. You suggest that every child under 15 should get Rs. 60 per year until it reaches the age of 15. Is that to be given irrespective of whatever wage the father was earning ?—That is my view.

A-1963. And of the number of children there are?—Yes. At present there is no provision like this; this is the minimum I propose for each child.

A-1964. So that if a man earning a small wage died and left a considerable number of children, the family would get very much more than they got while he was alive?—I do not think Rs. 5 is enough.

A-1965. Suppose he left five children—he might not have been earning Rs. 25 a month?—I do not think there can be five children under 15, because the mortality is so high.

A-1966. I think you will find such cases. Later on you suggest that the husband should only get half the amount due in case of death of a woman. At present he gets a much smaller amount than the wife gets owing to the smaller wage earned by the woman?—Both men and women are employed in the spinning department, and it is in this department that most of the accidents take place—very few in the weaving—and wages for men and women are the same in the spinning.

A-1967. That is not true of every occupation?—I am talking of the textile industry. I want a general application of my proposal, but if you find that you should pay more in other industries you can do so. This is the minimum that should be given; this is good, to begin with, for the textile industry.

A-1968. You suggest also that a man below 20 should not be employed on the night shift?—That is my view.

A-1969. At the same time you suggest that night and day shifts should change over. Would not that make difficulty? It would virtually exclude men under 20 if the shifts had to change over?—No. I think that half-timers should not be kept on. If the mills work night shifts they will not employ men under 20.

A-1970. But if you want to change shifts?—There are few mills that will work at nights, and they need not employ men under 20.

A-1971. With regard to 60 hours' work per week you say that the worker's efficiency has increased and the output has gone up, but it has not gone high enough to compensate for the loss to the owners due to the lesser number of hours of work. Have you any figures of production that would help us to come to a decision in regard to this matter?—I tried to find figures yesterday, but from memory I can tell you that I have taken figures just a year after we went into ten hours, and I found that out of 16½ hours' reduction, we had made up in the weaving about 11 per cent. and in the spinning about 5 per cent. This is from memory; I have not estimated it recently.

A-1972. You will be prepared to admit the possibility that after the system of shorter hours had been in force some time, the efficiency would further increase?—Per hour it will go up slightly; but you cannot expect any great efficiency.

A-1973. But I think you said that you made calculations two or three years after the present system came into operation?—No, after a year.

A-1974. As regards your answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola in respect of the reduction in the hours of work, you spoke of the danger of ruin to the industry. I take it that you were referring not to the conditions at present but to the conditions if hours were further reduced?—The condition of the industry is not at all good to-day, according to my view, and it will be very bad if a further reduction is made. But I am not recommending increase to 12 hours.

A-1975. But leaving aside Bombay itself, in practically every important centre of the industry production is increasing or has increased notably in the last two or three years?—That is due to better cotton and better machinery being used and not to the tariff policy of the Government.

A-1976. Then that does not suggest any danger of ruin?—I do not think the industry is in a sound condition to-day.

A-1977. With regard to "intervals" you say "The objects with which the interval is given . . . will be better served if it is given twice instead of once a day. But under the existing conditions it is neither desirable nor possible to make the change." You mean desirable but not possible?—It is not desirable this way that the work-people will not go out at that time.

A-1978. Why not?—They get food from home; some day it may be half an hour late and some day it may be half an hour earlier and as such they will be very greatly inconvenienced.

A-1979. Would it not be of benefit to the industry if wages were standardized?—It is not possible; it would be a benefit if it could be done, but I do not think it could be done.

A-1980. It could be done by a statutory wages board?—The conditions with regard to the raw material used, machinery and work vary so much from mill to mill that standardization is not possible.

A-1981. It has been attempted in Bombay?—Yes, with most disastrous results.

A-1982. The results are due to standardization?—I think it was very unscientific.

A-1983. With regard to fines you say "Deductions are made from the weavers' wages as compensation for the damages sustained through their carelessness in weaving cloth." Are they in any case given the damaged cloth?—If the damage is serious then it is given; if it is slight it is not given.

A-1984. It was suggested to us yesterday that where they were given the damaged cloth they suffered very little loss. Do you agree with that view?—I do not desire to express my personal opinion on that matter.

A-1985. You have given us very interesting statistics at the end of your memorandum. In your Jubilee mills there are twice as many men under 30 years of age as there are after. Can you give us an explanation?—As far as men are concerned, I think some of them go to weaving.

A-1986. But this relates to both spinning and weaving?—I sent a letter to the Secretary to the Commission informing him that we have 1,900 men in the mills and we could get reliable information—what we considered was good enough—from 1,380; these figures are based on 1,380.

A-1987. That is a representative sample I take it?—I really cannot say so, because of the percentage of males and females. There are very few females in the spinning; so the percentage taken on weaving and spinning generally does not give you a fair idea of the percentage of women employed.

A-1988. Take Appendix IV of your memorandum which shows that about half the number of employees have not more than four years' service. That seems a very large proportion of men leaving before they attain any long service?—That is so.

A-1989. What is the explanation for that?—I have not really looked into that.

A-1990. Is it that the conditions of the work are so arduous that the men cannot endure them for a long time?—They may be going from one mill to another due to the insanitary conditions of their homes, or they may be going to their villages and coming again. Though they join us again their service is not treated as continuous.

A-1991. You do not keep a record?—He might put in continuous service for some time and then go to his village for a year and again after that period rejoin us in that case he is treated as beginning his service afresh. The statement does not represent that the men leave the work after a few years' service but that they are fairly continuous in service for three years.

A-1992. Mr. Joshi: You state that a large portion of the labour in Ahmedabad is not permanently settled; you give the extent of permanent labour as 15 per cent. It might be that the causes of the labour not being permanently settled are, firstly, the housing conditions. Do you think, under present housing conditions, any worker would think of permanently settling in Ahmedabad?—They have got interests in villages and upcountry, and even if they are better housed they will not become permanent residents of Ahmedabad.

A-1993. Of course, there are several reasons, but bad housing may be one of them. The housing condition in towns like Ahmedabad, where people do not get a small suitable house or fresh air, is perhaps one of the causes why the labour force does not settle permanently?—If they own their houses here, then it will be all right, but even if housing conditions are improved they will not settle down permanently here.

A-1994. Nobody will like to settle down permanently in a *chawl*; if he has a small cottage of his own he would like to settle down?—Yes, if they have their own houses.

A-1995. It may also be due to another factor, namely, that old age is not provided for; nobody would like to settle down unless he knows that old age is provided for?—I do not think so. If he is to be provided for old age by going to the village, he would give preference to the village rather than to the town. There is no provision for old age here or there.

A-1996. Most of them do not possess land in villages and their condition therefore is the same; but village life may be cheaper?—That means having two establishments.

A-1997. Why?—Because his children will be working in Ahmedabad. Whatever he saves by the lower cost of living in the village he will spend more than that in running two establishments.

A-1998. Then again his connection is completely cut off when he comes to towns like Ahmedabad ?—He goes periodically to his village on holidays.

A-1999. So he has some establishment there ?—A house he may have.

A-2000. He shuts his house when he comes to the town ?—Either he lets it out or closes it down.

A-2001. Dealing with methods of recruitment you say "The Employment Department has not yet been able to show any good result, the reason being the disfavour with which it is viewed by the heads of the departments." I want to find out the reason why the heads of the departments look on this experiment with disfavour. Is it their desire to please their jobbers ?—No. I think the jobbers want to make money and they want to put up the head of the department to oppose it by telling him "the agent does not trust you, and so it is not better for you to have any hand in the matter of employment."

A-2002. The head of the department believes the words of the jobber ?—He feels his vanity is hurt when a subordinate tells him that the agent does not trust him.

A-2003. Do you also admit that there is some kind of corruption on the part of the jobbers ?—Yes, a good deal.

A-2004. It might be that the officers are also sharers in that corruption ?—I do not think so.

A-2005. As regards a Public Employment Agency you state "It is not, however, called for under the present conditions in Ahmedabad." Will it not help the workers if there is a public employment agency inasmuch as their going about the various mills for employment may be reduced ?—I have given reasons why it will be difficult to make a proper use of the agency. The men are required in the mills early in the morning and until the mills start working we will not know the number of absentees. The central agency cannot therefore be of any help in this regard.

A-2006. The central agency might start work early in the morning ?—As the agency cannot be informed of the number of men required until the mills actually start working, it will take time for the agency to send the men. The mills will not be agreeable to this procedure. As far as daily substitutes are concerned the mills always give preference to the men who call at the gates of the mills every morning.

A-2007. I am not speaking of the ordinary substitutes who wait at the gates. What I want to know is whether the agency cannot be of help when the mills want more men, not substitutes ?—The mills give preference to the substitutes who worked in the mills before ; there are some substitutes who come every day, and when there is a permanent vacancy the substitute is given the preference.

A-2008. As regards unemployment insurance you say that legislation preventing fragmentation of land and uneconomic holdings may prevent unemployment. I thought that legislation preventing fragmentation of land may create unemployment in villages ?—I do not share that view.

A-2009. It is not a question of views. If a worker has got some land he sticks to that land whether it gives him sufficient employment or not. He is employed, but there is under-employment. But if you prevent fragmentation some people will get sufficient employment while others will be thrown out of employment ?—I know of instances where if there are, say, three acres of land and there are three brothers, each of them get one acre, and all the three work outside instead of one man having the three acres and working it.

A-2010. Textile industry is an industry where there are Indians as well as Europeans as foremen. Do Indians compete successfully with Europeans as foreman, such as weaving masters and spinning masters ?—Yes.

A-2011. Dealing with Works Councils you say "A recent scheme was not viewed with favour by the Labour Union and had to be abandoned." Is not that due to the fact that the labour union feels that the workers' representatives on the Councils may not be wholly elected by the union ; if the Labour Union is represented on the joint council by the Union itself it will not have any objection ?—According to our scheme we wanted it to be entirely elected by the men, and the Chairman to be one of the assistant managers.

A-2012. Was it to be a wholly elected and not a joint committee ?—No nominated persons were to be on that committee.

A-2013. Except the Chairman ?—The Chairman had to keep accounts and to write down the proceedings.

A-2014. As regards housing, you seemed to admit that housing for working classes was not at present an economic proposition ?—What may be economic to a landlord may not be economic to a mill.

A-2015. To a landlord it is not ?—To a landlord it may be.

A-2016. To a municipality ?—The municipality does not look into the economic side, because there are other considerations.

A-2017. But suppose they want a sort of economic rent, they will not get it ?—According to my calculation, the deficit will be Rs. 60,000 a year.

A-2018. Does not the fact that the workers are not able to pay economic rent, show that their wages are low ?—It all depends on what they pay ; they pay about Rs. 5 or 6, and they will not pay more than that to the municipality.

A-2019. Even if they get better housing ?—It will involve cost to the municipality to put up better houses for which they will not be prepared to pay more.

A-2020. The majority of them at present pay between Rs. 4 and 6 ?—Yes.

A-2021. Rs. 4 to 6 is a fairly high percentage of the total income. The average income in Ahmedabad may be about Rs. 25 ?—No ; more than that.

A-2022. Between Rs. 25 and 30 ; it cannot be more ?—No, it is more.

A-2023. Will you give figures ?—No, I have not got them.

A-2024. The Labour Office figure is between Rs. 25 and 30 ?—Unless you know what has been really taken in for the purpose of calculation, it is difficult to give an opinion. I think that it is at least Rs. 40.

A-2025. Rs. 40 is the average ?—Not of a worker but of a family ; Rs. 40-50 will be the income of a family.

A-2026. You take the income of the whole family, including the income of the wife and children ?—I say that they keep one room, and the rent is not paid by one worker but by the family.

A-2027. You have already given us some figures which are very useful, but I thought that you might help the Commission by getting some figures as regards absenteeism on account of sickness. Will you kindly do this ?—I shall ask our office if they can get figures, and if they can we shall make an effort to supply them.

A-2028. In answer to a question you stated that there is a reluctance on the part of the workers to increase production ?—Reluctance to do more work.

A-2029. That is to increase production is it not ?—Increased production can be brought about by more application.

A-2030. Yes, by the effort of the worker. But he does not want to produce more ?—He does not want to take up more work than at present.

A-2031. Which will result in increased production ?—Yes.

A-2032. Is it due to the fact that when a worker increases production his rate is cut down ?—He does not increase the hours.

A-2033. Not increasing the hours, but when he gives you better production the rate is cut down so that his total earning for the month remains the same ?—Not the same ; we pay 50 per cent. more.

A-2034. You have got some scheme for increased production ?—If a man looks after two sides in the ring department he gets 50 per cent. more than on one side.

A-2035. I am not thinking of one man managing more looms. A man working on two looms gives you certain production, but suppose on the same two looms he were to give you better production ?—We give bonus for higher production.

A-2036. So you have got a scheme. What is your objection to giving the worker the whole benefit of the increased production ?—The primary object of our running the industry is not to find employment for men.

A-2037. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Mr. Joshi's point is supposing you have got a weaver on piece-work and he gets an increased production, he will then get more money at the end of the week. Would you reduce the rate if you found that he was getting a large production ?—Not at all.

A-2038. *Mr. Joshi* : My point was this : I have had a talk with several workers and I asked them why they did not show better production. One of the reasons which they gave was that if they showed better production, at the end of the month the rates were

changed so that the total income did not go up ?—I do not share that view. The workers in Ahmedabad are in such a position as not to permit such a thing.

A-2039. The rates are not varying ?—No, otherwise there will be a strike.

A-2040. Under the head " Diseases " you say " Diseases of the respiratory tracts are more prevalent among the workers in the Spinning Department ". We also had a statement from the Sanitary Association that phthisis is more prevalent in the textile industry. Will you therefore agree if I were to state that these diseases are a sort of industrial diseases due to the industry itself ?—No.

A-2041. What are they due to ?—If they put vacuum strippers on cards these diseases will go down.

A-2042. So long as that is not done the disease is really due to the industry itself ?—To the absence of vacuum strippers.

A-2043. But till then it becomes an industrial disease ?—I do not admit it.

A-2044. Due to the work in the industry, not due to the general surroundings in the city ?—No. There are so many reasons ; it may be early marriages, bad houses, insanitary conditions, illiteracy, and want of vacuum strippers in the spinning department.

A-2045. As regards the hours of work, you state that if the production increases there will not be difficulty in reducing the hours, but the workers do not show increased production and therefore there is unwillingness on the part of the millowners to reduce the hours. The workers do not give you continuous work because the hours are longer ; they cannot work continuously for 10 hours and so they only give you 8, $8\frac{1}{2}$ or 9 hours work but not continuous work for 10 hours.

Sir Victor Sassoon : When do they do continuous work for eight hours ?—No, they do not do, there is an hour's rest in between.

A-2046. *Mr. Joshi* : I am talking of 10 hours work ; they do not work 10 hours because they feel that it is too much. You are not prepared to reduce the hours because you feel that the workers may not work continuously if the hours are reduced. Somebody must make a beginning ; this seems to be a vicious circle ?—We have made a beginning from 12 to 10.

A-2047. Yes, but this 10 hours system is going on for the last 10 years. You showed by your figures which were taken one year after the experiment was begun that the production was reduced to some extent but not to the extent to which the hours were reduced.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Did not the witness say that he experimented with eight hours ?—I tried it.

A-2048. *Mr. Joshi* : I want to know whether you can give us figures of your production for these ten years so that I can make a comparison to see whether there has really been any reduction ?—A comparison is not possible because we have changed our plant ; we are using better machines.

A-2049. You cannot really say that on account of the reduction of hours the production is less ?—Not much in my mill.

A-2050. So an experiment has to be made regarding the reduction of hours. The vicious circle is this : You are not willing to reduce because you feel that the workers may not give you 9 hours full work, and the workers also feel that unless the hours are reduced they cannot work continuously and intensively ?—The vicious circle is here that the workers who can do more work do not wish to do it and those who can earn more wages do not wish to earn them.

A-2051. But their fear is that the rates will be reduced ?—I say there is no foundation for that. I am speaking for Ahmedabad, and I know that the workers are so strong that even if there was any suspicion they could get it redressed at once.

A-2052. *Mr. Joshi* : Do you agree that the hours in Japan are not longer than in India ?—They are longer, according to my information ; I may be wrong.

A-2053. According to the information which we have in a report made by the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners, they have, since the end of July, reduced the hours to 17 for two shifts, that is, $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours a shift ?—I have drawn my information from the same book and I find that the workers doing day shift can work up to 12 hours. Up to 1931 they can work for 12 hours.

A-2054. I do not think so. Now they have two shifts of $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours each ?—Formerly their monthly hours were 468 but under the new system they go up to 476.

A-2055. But on the whole the daily working hours are not longer?—They get only 2 holidays a month instead of four.

A-2056. They have two shifts of $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours each; there are two holidays in a month, that is, half a day more per week or $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours more. It really means their daily work is $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours?—They have only half an hour rest in between instead of one hour we have.

A-2057. Whatever it is $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours are the total working hours. They work from 5 to 11, that is, 18 hours; half an hour rest for each shift; that comes to 17 hours. So $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours is the net working period and 9 hours is the gross working time. Their net working hours are $8\frac{1}{2}$ while our net working hours are 10. They get only two rest days in a month, that is, half a day in a week. So they work for $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours more during the whole week?—Let me calculate. Instead of four days rest in a month they have only two days, or half a day in a week. Therefore they have to work on the average $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours more on this account every week. That increases the average number of hours per day by $\frac{3}{4}$ hours. Adding that to $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours we get an average of $9\frac{1}{4}$ hours per day.

The Chairman : I think the position is quite clear now. Under the Japanese arrangement the length of the shift is shortened, but the total number of working hours is greater.

A-2058. *Mr. Joshi* : They work for $6\frac{1}{2}$ days at $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours each or for about 56 hours per week, so that the Japanese hours are shorter than ours by about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Yes.

A-2059. You agree that their wages also are not smaller than ours?—Are you taking per person or per loom? It may be higher per person, but per loom it is less in Japan.

Mr. Joshi : Now we have seen that their wages are higher, but their hours are shorter.....

Sir Victor Sassoon : But their efficiency is greater.

Mr. Joshi : Efficiency is another question. But from these two points of view Japan has no advantage over India.

Sir Victor Sassoon : They have a great advantage in efficiency.

Mr. Joshi : That will have to be calculated. In Japan women are allowed to work at night.

A-2060. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Not now. They can work even now till 11 o'clock. Again mills working only day shifts can go up to 12 hours. But here we are working only day shifts of ten hours.

A-2061. But can you show that there are actually any mills in Japan which work 12 hours?—There is an exemption provided in the Act, and that would not have been there unless there had been a necessity for it. Clause 2 of Factory Legislation says that exemption is granted to cotton textile mills where only one shift is worked by which up to 1931 they may work 12 hours.

A-2062. That is the Act. But are there in practice any mills working 12 hours?

The Chairman : I think the Bombay Labour Office will be able to give us reliable information.

A-2063. *Mr. Joshi* : With regard to unclaimed wages you say, "Wages claimed within a period of six months from the date on which they are due are paid out on proper identification." Why do you restrict the period to six months when the general law of limitation is three years?—They ought to give us notice when they leave. But in special cases we pay them.

A-2064. But under the ordinary law they are entitled to their wages up to a period of three years. Why do you restrict that period?—If they do not give us notice when they leave we do not propose to pay except in special cases.

A-2065. But you have not referred to this condition of notice in your memorandum?—I shall do that now.

A-2066. The rule is that the wages will be forfeited after six months if they leave you without notice?—Yes.

A-2067. Is that the rule in your mill?—Yes.

A-2068. *Miss Power* : In your memorandum you say, "In the interest of the welfare of their families and children, it is undesirable that married women should be employed in the Spinning and Frame Departments." Why do you distinguish between the employment of women in one department and in another?—In the winding and reeling departments the women might come and go as they liked. They might come late or go early if they wanted. But in the spinning and frame departments they have to be at the mill when the mill starts and leave the mill when it closes.

A-2069. Is it your contention that the bulk of married women work fewer hours than those worked by the rest?—No, they do not do less. But they may come half an hour late or go home early.

A-2070. If you restrict them to winding and reeling departments will you not be diminishing the volume of employment available for women?—I am talking of married women only.

A-2071. But between 80 and 90 per cent. of employed women are married?—That is so.

A-2072. So that you would really be restricting the volume of employment for women if you confined them to the winding and reeling departments?—Yes.

A-2073. We were told yesterday that the policy of the mill union was to discourage the employment of women. The Millowners' Association also told us that there was a decrease in the number of women employed although the number of mills in actual operation has increased. Do you agree with this policy of the union?—I consider women inefficient and I want to reduce their number in my mills.

A-2074. But the bulk of the women employed are wives of spinners and men who get the lower ranges of remuneration. Are they not?—Yes, they are. But we retain such women as are wives or relatives of male workers in our mills. We do not want to keep women who come alone.

A-2075. The average wage of a spinner is, we are told, round about Rs. 26 compared with approximately Rs. 44 for a weaver. If you discourage employment of women who are wives of spinners, do you suggest that the spinners' earnings are sufficient to maintain their families?—No, we do not discourage such women whose husbands are employed in our mills. But we do not want women.

A-2076. I am talking of the policy of the trade as a whole?—I am speaking only of the policy of my mill.

A-2077. Do you think the statement that it is the policy of the union to discourage the employment of women is correct?—The union wants the wages of male workers—the spinners—to be doubled and that women must be kept out of work.

A-2078. What lies behind the discrepancy between the earnings of spinners and weavers, which is so much bigger than in England?—I have stated already how the wages system was developed in India. It was only a drift without any definite plan. I think there should not be such a big discrepancy.

A-2079. Is there not arbitration on foot to raise the wages of spinners?—The only remedy lies in putting the one up and bringing the other down in order to narrow the difference.

A-2080. With regard to the type of buildings that are put up what sort of supervision is exercised over the plans and estimates before the buildings are erected? To whom are they submitted for scrutiny?—I believe they have to be sent to the Municipal authorities to see whether they conform to the by-laws or not.

A-2081. But is that what actually happens?—Yes.

A-2082. Are they not submitted to the Factory Inspectors?—No, I do not think so.

A-2083. Do you not think it is advisable that that should be done?—That is my view. What I had in mind was not factory buildings so much as residential houses.

A-2084. I meant factory buildings. In your memorandum you deal with the question of education for the children of your workers. Is there a system of compulsory education in this Presidency or not?—There is in theory.

A-2085. Does that work in Ahmedabad or not?—Government do not give permission to make it compulsory.

A-2086. So that there is no compulsory elementary education now?—No.

A-2087. Are there enough municipal schools at present for the number of children of workers who wish to go to school, or whose parents wish them to go to school? Or is there a shortage of seats in the existing primary schools?—I do not know sufficiently well to express an opinion about that.

A-2088. In your memorandum you say that the "number of workers' children taking advantage of this facility is negligible—six in the Calico Mills and nine in the Jubilee Mills." The number is extraordinarily low. Is this indicative of Ahmedabad as a whole or due to the very few children you employ?—That refers only to secondary and college education, for which fees and books are given free to the children of employees. That does not refer to elementary schools. And we have only six half-timers in our mills.

A-2089. Yours is a very advanced Mill. Could you tell us the percentage of children of your employees who are attending elementary education classes?—No, we have not the figures.

A-2090. Could you try and get the figures for us?—We shall make an effort to collect them and send them to the Commission.

A-2091. Could you tell us at the same time when you supply these figures whether you think that that is characteristic of the mill population as a whole, or whether it is rather better in the case of your mills? I want to get some idea of how many children are being educated?—Yes, I shall do so.

A-2092. *Miss Cama*: You say that your efforts to get a lady doctor for your mill hospitals have not been successful so far. What efforts did you make?—We advertised several times.

A-2093. And no lady doctor came forward?—No suitable one came forward.

A-2094. *Lady Nillanth*: You said that the millowners made a profit of 4 per cent. on their investments, while they had to borrow money at 6 per cent. Could you explain what that means?—They make 4 per cent. on the block, i.e., on the total capital invested in building and machinery. But for working capital they borrow at 6 per cent.

A-2095. You are making an experiment of employing graduates as probationers in your mills. I have heard some millowners say that they would prefer uneducated and less educated people to graduates. You have stated that the work of the graduates is satisfactory. But have you found their work to be so good as to induce you to prefer them to uneducated and less educated people?—Yes, I do prefer them.

A-2096. But there are many people who say that educated people are no good for such work? Do you share that opinion?—That has not been my experience.

A-2097. You deduct 1 per cent. of the wages as contribution to the Servants' Self-helping Fund to pay for the various welfare activities in the mills. Do your workers mind this cut so much as to transfer their services to mills which do not make this deduction from their wages?—No, they do not. We have no difficulty whatever in getting men.

A-2098. Do you contribute anything to the Fund?—We make up the deficit whenever the income falls short of the expenditure.

A-2099. Is it a large amount that you have to pay?—No, it is a very small amount.

A-2100. Are managing agencies hereditary in Ahmedabad and in Bombay?—That is the case in Ahmedabad. In Bombay also that has been the case for a number of years.

A-2101. But does that go from father to son?—Not necessarily. It may go to a partner in the firm, or to a nominee or anyone else.

A-2102. *Mr. Asavle*: You stated that you were not a member of the Millowners' Association?—No.

A-2103. Do you generally respect the decisions of the Association in all matters of general policy as they do in Bombay?—I do and I have got to.

A-2104. What have you done to check corruption in the employment of workers?—I am making the best efforts I can.

A-2105. In your memorandum you say that the workers "can afford to buy better food than what they usually eat." How can the workers do that with the low wages you pay?—I meant that they could buy more wholesome food with the money they spend at present. For instance, they could avoid all these spices which are unnecessary and unwholesome.

A-2106. Would it not be better in the interests of the workers if the Mills themselves opened cheap grain shops and supplied wholesome food?—We are trying to open a canteen for the workers.

A-2107. In your memorandum you say that "a special fund has been created to enable the workers to obtain loans for short periods." Are your workers always indebted to the Pathans and the *Sowcars*?—I think they are. I have not collected any definite information, but that is my view.

A-2108. When you have provided them with a fund for getting loans, does it not follow that they are always indebted?—I am not in a position to make a definite statement. However I believe they are indebted.

A-2109. Why are they so indebted?—For the same reason that you find in higher strata of society.

A-2110. But do the workers enjoy the same comforts and amenities as people in higher strata of society?—But they have the same human weaknesses; they are common to both.

A-2111. You say that your cricket and tennis clubs have proved a success. But do the workers really enjoy these games?—I think so from the number of workers that go in for cricket. They make full use of the cricket club. They do not so much play tennis though that also is open to them.

A-2112. When do they play cricket?—After 6 o'clock.

A-2113. After doing hard work for 10 hours during the day?—I do not admit the statement that they work hard for 10 hours during the day.

A-2114. In your memorandum you say that the "widows and orphans of ex-workers who are destitute receive financial assistance from the mills." But is it not necessary to make a legal provision for old age for the workers themselves who leave the mills after a long service of fifteen or twenty years?—That is not possible at present, until we get complete responsible government.

A-2115. If a provision like the Provident Fund was made, would it not be useful both to the worker and his family?—If that could not be applied universally for all classes of labourers I do not see that should be done for a particular industry.

A-2116. You say that "the last wage cut was made in 1923." What was the percentage of the cut?—15½ per cent.

A-2117. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Was that not a fixed amount?—I think that was about 2½ annas in the rupee. I do not know definitely.

A-2118. *Mr. Asavle*: In your memorandum you say that "it cannot be said of the Indian cotton industry that the wages paid are starvation wages in any sense of the word; on the other hand they are higher than what are paid in other occupations...." Do you suggest that you pay more wages than the railways or other factories?—Yes.

A-2119. Can you give an example?—I am talking of Ahmedabad and Gujrat.

A-2120. What about the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway workshops? Do they not pay their workers more than you pay yours?—Their workshops are in Rutlam and Ajmer; they are not in Ahmedabad. In Ahmedabad there are very few workers employed by the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway.

Mr. Sastri: Moreover the memorandum refers to wages paid "in other occupations which are open to the type of workers who generally work in the mills."

A-2121. *Mr. Asavle*: But are the wages higher than those paid in any other occupations?—Surely our workers get more than what many school-masters and Government servants get.

A-2122. *Mr. Asavle*: But do not school masters have additional income from private tuition, etc.?—But they are not supposed to have any according to Government rules.

A-2123. But are they not actually having additional income from other sources?—Even that does not come to much, if any.

A-2124. With regard to wages claimed six months after they fell due, why do you refuse to pay them? Are they not hard earned?—We do that when they leave us without notice. But if they have sufficient grounds for having left us without notice, such as illness or other emergency, we pay them as a special case.

A-2125. *Mr. Lallji*: In your memorandum you say that "there are a number of men every morning at the starting time who apply to be taken as substitutes." Do you refer to the *badlis* here?—Yes, there are a class of men who do not like continuous work and always like to be *badlis*. There are others also who work in different mills till they get a permanent employment.

A-2126. In your memorandum you say also that the "labourers in town looking for industrial work" should be sent to villages and that "cottage industries should also be started and encouraged." What sort of cottage industries would you suggest?—It requires an economic enquiry to solve this problem. It must be different in different provinces according to the needs of the province and the different conditions existing there.

A-2127. But do you find a lot of people coming down to Ahmedabad for employment?—Yes, they do.

A-2128. You say that the education received by an educated man does not encourage him to seek anything except professional and desk work. What sort of education would

you like them to have so as to make them fit for textile industry or any other industry ?—At present the Universities are working on the principle of mass production like factories. It ought to be changed.

A-2129. Would you suggest technical education ?—Whatever education they get, it should be such as to develop their character. They should not be ashamed of manual work entailed in an industrial occupation.

A-2130. Are you generally reducing the number of half-timers in your mills ?—We have got 16 half-timers in the Jubilee Mills and 7 in the Calico Mills. I do not know what other mills are doing.

A-2131. But why is the number so small in the Calico Mills ?—Because the Calico Mills thought of it before the Jubilee.

A-2132. If you do not give employment to half-timers between 12 and 15, will they not be a burden on their parents ?—I do not think they should be employed before 15.

A-2133. But should they not be given some occupation ?—They must go to school.

A-2134. But if they do not go to school do they not get worse ?—When there is a hard case we employ them.

A-2135. With regard to bonus or profit sharing you say that no scheme based on separate profit of each company will work well in the cotton industry. Why is that so ?—The profits of the different mills vary such a lot and the distribution will be so uneven that it will bring about controversy and dissatisfaction.

A-2136. From appendix VI of your memorandum it is seen that the majority of your workers (53·2 per cent.) pay Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 as rent. Appendix V shows that 44 per cent. of your workers live 3 to 5 in a room and 14 per cent. live 6 to 8. Adding the two we find that a majority of your workers (58 per cent.) live 3 to 8 in a room and pay Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 as rent. How much per head do your workers generally pay as rent ?—If five persons stay together paying five rupees, then it works out to Re. 1 per head.

A-2137. What rent does your worker pay on an average ?—Four to six rupees.

A-2138. Is that for one man ?—That is for a family.

A-2139. Does that consist of two workers ?—Two workers or two workers and a half-timer.

A-2140. What percentage of wages does he pay in rent ?—A family earning Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 pays Rs. 5 to Rs. 6.

A-2141. If new and better *chawls* are provided will the workmen be willing to pay more ?—Under the municipal scheme they propose to charge a rent of Rs. 5-8-0. The estimates are prepared on that basis.

A-2142. In Bombay the labourers are not prepared to pay more for better tenements. They stay four or five together in a single tenement and do not want improved housing accommodation. Are conditions similar in Ahmedabad ?—I think they will be prepared to pay Rs. 5 or Rs. 6, but not more.

A-2143. *Colonel Russell* : I am not quite sure exactly as to your opinion as regards the housing question. In your written memorandum you say : "The problem of housing, closely bound as it is with the health and productive capacity of the worker, is of no less importance to the employer than to the employee." What exactly do you imply in that statement ?—We should get more return from the municipality for what we are paying, because we should have more contented and efficient men.

A-2144. You mean that would give you better efficiency ?—Contented workers, better health and more efficiency.

A-2145. You would agree that you would get all these if better houses are provided ?—Yes.

A-2146. Is it not that an argument for spending money on houses ?—Yes, but who should spend it is the question.

A-2147. In connection with the same matter, what is the end you have in view in developing the welfare activities that you describe further on, namely, crèches, medical facilities, schools, playgrounds and so on ? Is it an eye-wash or what ?—Mixed motives.

A-2148. Eye-wash is included ?—No. I have only two things in view, one is that better relations should exist between the workers and the employers, and secondly, we want to do the maximum for the men who are working for us.

A-2149. Is it meant to increase the efficiency ?—I do not think so ; it has not increased the efficiency.

A-2150. With regard to building by-laws you said to Miss Power, I think, that building plans were sent to the Municipality?—That is so.

A-2151. Is there any use practically in doing so seeing that conditions are as they are in the Municipality?—The by-laws are defective, to begin with, but we have to make the best use of what we have.

A-2152. Who examines the plans in the Municipality?—There is a qualified engineer.

A-2153. They have got one?—Yes.

A-2153a. Dealing with medical facilities you say: "Our efforts to get a lady doctor have not been successful so far." Will you tell us what salary you offered?—We offered Rs. 200 to 300.

A-2154. But you could not get one?—We could not get an M.B. and B.S.

A-2155. You wanted an M.B. and B.S.?—Yes, we could not get one.

A-2156. Not even for that salary?—No.

A-2157. What is the explanation for that?—I do not know; we could not get a qualified person.

A-2158. Did you advertise?—Yes, and we wrote to the Grant Medical College and others, but we could not get a suitable lady doctor. Let me make it clear: we did not want to permit private practice.

A-2159. You say with regard to "bathing and washing" that there is no drainage in the locality and hence this scheme has been held up. Would it not be possible to carry all the drainage into a septic tank or some sanitary arrangement of that kind?—We have got a septic tank, but it is not a success; there is something wrong, and we are looking into it.

A-2160. That is a matter of management?—Yes, that is so.

A-2161. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it due to lack of water?—No; there is some mistake in the original design, and we are looking into it.

A-2162. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Would you consider three annas a day spent by a worker on food to be a sufficient amount to keep him in physical well-being?—That would depend on the size and the physique of the worker.

A-2163. Let me put it to you this way. You think a worker who spends three annas a day can afford to purchase commodities with the three annas to give him two decent meals a day, to keep him in physical well-being?—He will do fairly well if he cooks it at home; he may not be able to buy it cooked.

A-2164. Now that you have considered this matter, what could he afford to buy for three annas a day to cook at home, supposing they are messing together, four in a family?—It will not be very good.

A-2165. The report on an enquiry into the working classes family budgets in Ahmedabad shows that workers here earn between Rs. 30 and 40 a month which, I understand, was the average wage that you gave. On pages 40 to 43 of the report you will notice that totals have been worked out and food expenditure calculated for a family with a unit of 3.48, and if you total up the figures they will come to less than three annas per head per day. Will you refer to your own statement with regard to "dietary" in which you state "Workers can afford to buy better food than what they usually eat." Is there any margin?—I do not wish to pronounce any opinion.

A-2166. I am putting you the figures as quoted in the report?—I cannot accept the figures without inquiry.

A-2167. Suppose I put it to you this way, even if you do not accept them without an inquiry. The figures there given of expenditure on food and on clothing total up to the average income between Rs. 30 and 40. Supposing that is correct?—I believe that a man spends more than 3 annas a day.

A-2168. That is a matter we can consider a little later. Let me put it to you this way. There is your statement that they can afford to buy better food than they are eating at the present time, and if the margin as laid down is 3 annas...?—But I do not accept that figure.

A-2169. You do not?—No; without inquiry I am not prepared to accept it.

A-2170. Would you prepare a statement showing in what particulars that figure is correct?—It requires looking into details as to how that figure was arrived at; I cannot know what items were taken into account in making that calculation.

A-2171. At any rate your opinion is that you would not consider 3 annas a day for an adult spent on food to be a sufficient amount?—It is inadequate.

A-2172. You said that the average house-rent that is paid is about Rs. 4 to 6. Have you any experience of what it costs to keep a stable for a horse here?—I have no experience; I do not know what a stable would cost.

A-2173. Dealing with methods of recruitment, you have referred to the question of jobbers. Could you give me some information, out of your own experience, in regard to the practice that prevails of employing children who are hired out and keeping them there and the jobbers living practically on their earnings?—I have heard of it in Ahmedabad, but I have no information that such practice does exist; that is my personal opinion.

A-2174. Do you happen to remember a particular case that happened not very long ago in which a boy was brought into a mill by a jobber and the jobber lived on his earnings, and eventually there was a fight and this boy of 18 when he grew up refused to pay the jobber. As a result of the fight he killed this jobber and he was prosecuted and sent to a borstal jail?—I do not remember. It is an evil that ought to be remedied.

A-2175. You cannot tell me anything about the extent of this evil?—I cannot; I know it is there.

A-2176. Does it happen, for instance, that a weaver looking after two looms gets hold of a boy to look after another two looms; he gets remuneration for looking after four looms?—We do not permit that in our mills.

A-2177. Could you tell me if that practice prevails?—I do not wish to speak about other mills.

A-2178. It is your concern to see that you make good profits out of your industry?—Yes.

A-2179. It is your concern to see that there is no unnecessary absenteeism due to sickness or other causes?—Yes.

A-2180. And it is your concern to see that the efficiency of your workers is kept at a high level?—Yes.

A-2181. Do you not think that bad housing conditions affect all these factors?—I do.

A-2182. Then would you not consider it a part of your duty to provide decent housing for your workers?—I am prepared to make my contribution to the municipality; all the mills should be taxed for that purpose.

A-2183. Are you aware that in Japan 80 per cent. of the workers who work in the mill industry are housed by the employers under excellent housing conditions?—There is no analogy between Japan and India; we are a dependency while Japan is not.

A-2184. When it is a question of cost of production you want to make an analogy with other countries but when it is a question of housing you bring in the question of dependency?—What one country does may not be right for another country under different conditions.

A-2185. Do you not think it is right that your labour force should be contented and efficient and that for that purpose it should be properly housed?—I say the municipality should do that, and the mills by way of taxes should pay the deficit between the rent they get and the rent they ought to get.

A-2186. *Mr. Cliffl*: Let us take the first three statements given at the end of your memorandum. You have added a foot-note. Subject to that foot-note, might these statements be applicable to the other mills in this area?—I cannot say that; it will be a mistake to take these statements as quite reliable.

A-2187. Kindly turn to the concluding part of your memorandum. You were asked questions about the disability under which people are suffering, the lack of responsibility on the part of the Government and so forth. Your view is that when such circumstances exist, the problem of increasing the standard of the worker becomes difficult?—That applies to all people in the country.

A-2188. Would you help me in this, especially with regard to the disability which you have stated. What is the duty of the employer in these mills towards the employee?—In every country every citizen looks to Government to set an example, and it is the duty of Government to see that that is done.

A-2189. Take the people employed in this industry in this area. The position of the work-people is admittedly bad. Everybody seems to be suffering under a disability. What is the most immediate practical step that the employers in this industry could take with regard to housing?—Comparatively speaking, we cannot say that it is worse than in other industries.

A-2190. Would you excuse me for a moment and see whether we can get away from comparisons?—There is nothing absolute.

A-2191. I was wondering whether you could help us at all, faced with the situation that is admittedly bad. There are two conditions. It seems to me, which are stated in your memorandum, one is that the standard of life should be improved, and the second is that the efficiency of the worker should also be improved. That, I think, is running through your memorandum?—That is so.

A-2192. Taking these two things—improvement in the standard of life and increasing the efficiency of the worker—what would you say as an employer are immediate practical steps that might be taken to secure some improvement?—I have suggested elsewhere; I cannot point out to you straight away. If the mills do more work and the wages are put up, the standard of living of the workers and their earnings will go up.

A-2193. You had of course a time in the history of your industry when wages were reduced by, I think, 15½ per cent.?—Yes.

A-2194. That reduction was uniform to all classes of workers, was it not?—I think so.

A-2195. In reply to a question put to you, you suggested that to level up the wages you should raise those which are low and reduce those which are higher. Was that system adopted when the last reduction was made?—I really do not know; I was not in the Association.

A-2196. The Millowners' Association enumerated the policy which ought to be adopted in respect of payment of wages. I believe I am correct in saying that there is now an application before the employers' association that the wages reduction should be restored. Did the employers either in 1923, or after they received this application put forward that policy?—I do not know; I am not in the Association. But there is one thing I would like to say, that in other countries wages have gone up because the number of men, say, working on 1,000 spindles, has come down, whereas in India it is the same now as it was 40 years ago.

A-2197. I am not disputing your facts. What I am asking is whether you could help us in making any suggestion to improve the efficiency of the worker at the time?—I have already said that you must educate them, you must give them better houses, and make them earn more; their standard of life will improve if they do more work.

A-2198. *The Chairman*: You yourself, I take it, are prepared if the Union is agreeable to act with you?—I have offered my spinners Rs. 80 a month but they will not accept it.

A-2199. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that the necessary condition to improve the efficiency is the granting of these other conditions, namely, housing, education, food and other things?—About housing, under the present circumstances, it cannot be done. The Municipality can do it and they can take up the question.

A-2200. I want to know what can be done in the present circumstances?—I am in the Municipality and I am trying to get the programme through.

A-2201. I appreciate that. But at the moment nothing has been done?—5,000 houses cannot be built in three months.

A-2202. What should the employer do when he is faced with the problem?—He should move the Government and the Municipality, agree to pay taxes which are required to make up the deficit and see that the work is carried out soon.

A-2203. He should not make any direct move on his own volition in that direction?—He should do it. About compulsory education I can only do what I can; I am trying to get it introduced in the Municipality. The Municipality is prepared to find money, but the Government are not prepared to give permission for compulsion.

A-2204. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Has the Government refused to give the permission?—Yes, because the Act lays down that if compulsion is applied Government shall make a contribution; they have no money to make the contribution so they say, and they do not give permission.

A-2205. But they do not stand in the way of free education?—No, they will not pay. We want compulsion with free education.

A-2206. *Mr. Ahmed*: You said that you want to raise the standard of living and the standard of literacy of your workers. Do you know that in other countries elementary education is provided by the employers?—I did not see it in England.

A-2207. You have got no night schools for your workers?—No, we have day schools.

A-2208. Has no provision been made by you in regard to that?—The statutory obligation for doing that is on the Municipality.

A-2209. I asked you whether you made any provision?—It is not part of my duty.

A-2210. Do I take it that your part is to take the loaves and fishes of the profits of the concern?—That is not my part.

A-2211. In view of the fact that no provision is made by the employers, there must be some principle adopted in respect of education, housing and raising the standard of living?—Yes.

A-2212. You have already said that you are in favour of raising the standard of life of the workers, giving them good housing accommodation and making them learned. I take it that you are also in favour of the principles enunciated by the authors in their books on labour?—Unless you give the names of the authors, I cannot express any opinion; one author might have written one thing and another might have written entirely different things.

A-2213. There must be some equitable proportion in the distribution of profits, you can take a share and give a share to the Municipality?—I have made it clear that I want the agency to be the Municipality and the payment to be made by the mills. The work is to be done by the Municipality, and I am prepared to pay for it.

A-2214. So that you would be prepared to pay the cost in proportion to your profits if the Municipality levied a tax from you?—I am not now talking of any definite proportion whatever. Education is badly needed and cannot wait. The workers must be given adequate accommodation. Let the Municipality do these. If there is a deficit the mills will be willing to pay a share.

A-2215. And you are prepared to pay your adequate share?—Even more than that.

A-2216. With regard to your concluding words used in your written memorandum, you have referred to some omissions and commissions of the Government, but the Government have not passed any legislation prescribing a minimum living wage to the workers in your industry. They have not also compelled you to spend a certain proportion of your profits on the education of your workers' children. Therefore, have not the Government been too kind to you and neglected to do their duty as far as the labourers are concerned?—That may be your view. I do not agree with you.

A-2217. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In Appendix I, you give the number of workers in your mills as 1,380. In Appendix VIII—statement showing the extent to which the workers go to their villages—you have tabulated the information received only from 161 workmen. How many workers were asked to give this information?—All the 1,380 workers were asked, but some were not able to give the information.

A-2218. Do you suggest that only 161 persons were able to give the required information?—Yes.

A-2219. May I assume that the remaining 1,219 persons have not gone to their villages at all for holidays?—They were not able to give any information sufficiently reliable to be incorporated in this statement to be submitted to the Commission.

A-2220. You say that your permanent labour force is only 15 per cent. On the other hand the Millowners' Association say that that is 80 per cent. What is the difference due to?—My figures show only 15 per cent. and not 80 per cent.

A-2221. Here is a variation between practical men. You are a practical man, so are the others. Could you explain what the difference is due to?—There seems to be a wide divergence in the interpretation of the word "permanent". By "Permanent" I mean permanent residents of Ahmedabad. They mean by the same term, people of Ahmedabad and those coming from within a radius of 50 miles of Ahmedabad.

A-2222. You say that 15 per cent. of your workers are permanent residents of Ahmedabad. Where do the rest come from?—From such places as the Central Provinces, the United Provinces and Madras.

A-2223. During certain seasons of the year your workers go home. For instance, they go home during the marriage season, during the sowing season and the harvest season. They also go home when they feel it too hot to work here. During those seasons you will be somewhat short of hands and your production will vary. Could you give us for any one of your mills what the production is month by month?—I have made an enquiry and I find that we have never been short of hands during the year, nor did our production go down at any time.

A-2224. I do not want you to give the actual figures of production lest your competitors might take advantage of that. But could you give a comparative statement for the mills under your management showing what the production is in yards or in tons for the various months of the year?—I have looked into the figures myself and I find that the production has been the same all through the year for different months.

A-2225. But could you not give the figures ?—It would not give you a clear idea. Suppose I took yards as the unit. Then the yardage may vary. If I took tons, the counts might vary, and some may be bleached and some may not be. That would not give you a clear idea. If you still wanted them I would have no objection.

A-2226. *The Chairman* : There are several factors ?—Efficiency is the thing really to be taken. That is found to be the same in different months of the year.

A-2227. You maintain efficiency as far as your production is concerned which continues to be the same all the 12 months of the year irrespective of what particular workers are there. Is that so ?—If I work coarser counts, production must go down and efficiency also will be reduced. To this extent there is a variation, but not on account of the workmen going away to their villages. It has been found that there is not less production on account of workmen going away to their villages.

A-2228. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Can this be said to be a reason why your efficiency does not drop even though workmen leave for their villages : that you have always suitable men waiting to be taken on ?—I think our wages are a little higher.

A-2229. Is not that a cause of your uniform efficiency ? I understand that you pay 25 per cent. more than the current rate ?—The workers earn more in our mills than in other mills.

A-2230. I have been told that it is 25 per cent. higher than in other mills so that the best labour is always trying to go to you ?—That may be a reason.

A-2231. That is why your efficiency does not drop even though the men leave for their villages ?—Yes.

A-2232. In your memorandum you say that if a worker who is paid by time leaves for the second half of the day without permission he is marked absent for the whole day. Would you explain the system fully ?—A worker who comes in the morning is marked present. But if he leaves after midday without permission he is not paid for the time he has put on the mills in the morning.

A-2233. He is penalized for his absence without permission by forfeiting the wages due to him for the work he did in the morning. That is the position so far as a time-worker is concerned. What is the position with regard to piece-worker in the same circumstances ?—The work done by the piece-worker in the morning is noted on a dial. The timekeeper makes a note of that and the company gets the money. It is not paid to the piece-worker who has left without permission, or to the piece-worker who comes in the afternoon. But such occasions are very rare and generally the men leave with permission if they want to leave.

A-2234. Do you work single shift or double shift in your mills ?—We work single shift.

A-2235. Do you pay a higher rate for night shift than for day shift ?—Yes, we pay 15 to 20 per cent. higher.

A-2236. Is your canteen in operation ?—No, we are just furnishing it and getting it ready.

A-2237. Have you ever tried to supply grain at cheap wholesale prices to your workers ?—I was talking of cooked food when I referred to the canteen.

A-2238. But what about grains ?—We gave it during the War.

A-2239. Was that a success ? Was that popular with the men ?—No.

A-2240. In your experience although the grain you gave was cheaper, it was not popular with the men ?—No.

A-2241. Mr. Joshi was asking about Japanese hours and wages. Supposing you get the same efficiency as the Japanese, would you be prepared to give Japanese conditions of work to your workmen ?—I should be very happy to do so.

A-2242. The question of hours of work is very much dependent on the question of efficiency. Is not that so ?—Certainly.

A-2243. Are you not giving your workers sufficient opportunities to increase their efficiency and get more wages ?—Yes.

A-2244. Did you not offer your spinners as much as Rs. 80 a month ? What were the terms of the offer ?—Working single side they were earning Rs. 13 or Rs. 14 for 16 days. That came to Rs. 25 a month. I offered to give them another side and pay 50 per cent. more, so that they might get Rs. 21 instead of Rs. 13 and odd or Rs. 14. That came to Rs. 37 or 38 a month. They are now working two sides. I then offered them four sides so that they might earn Rs. 80 a month.

A-2245. What counts will they work at ?—70's and 100's, and 40's combed.

A-2246. With high draught ?—We have the ordinary rollers.

A-2247. *The Chairman*: Do you weave Indian cottons with 70's?—No, we weave Sakel, the Egyptian cotton.

A-2248. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You were offering higher wages to your workers if they could look after four sides. But did you consider that the effort of the worker in looking after four sides of 80's to 100's would be more than if he were looking after one side only in 6's?—I think it would be less.

A-2249. Have you made any tests from the point of view of the number of breakages?—We are discussing this with the union. I am making tests and finding out how many yards a man walks every hour, how many piecings he has to do for the different counts from 1's to 100's.

A-2250. But at present you have no figure?—They are not ready.

A-2251. Would you let us have the figures when they are ready?—Yes.

A-2252. Generally speaking if a man worked without any great increase in effort and gave you efficiency you are prepared to give him more wages by your managing methods?—Yes.

A-2253. Is it a fact that your difficulty is that the men are not prepared to become more efficient?—That is the greatest difficulty to-day.

A-2254. Would you say that one of the reasons is that they fear that there might be displacement of labour?—I have agreed not to displace any unless there is a vacancy. I have agreed not to give more work till a man leaves.

A-2255. Might it not be said that you would be doing so merely by not filling vacancies?—Yes.

A-2256. Might it be said that they consider that some of the workers in the mills to-day get their positions which they would not have got if there had been methods of efficiency?—It is not correct to say that in India. The number of employees in industries is so small compared with others. In England this may be a serious trouble. In India it ought not to be.

A-2257. Suppose the Union came forward and decided to accept methods of efficiency. Could you think of some way by which the total number of men will remain the same?—We could do that by arranging night work, starting new mills and extending old mills.

A-2258. You consider that if the Indian textile workers were prepared to become efficient, the cost of production would be so lowered to a point at which it would increase the demand and enable the displaced workers to be re-engaged either in the form of double shifts or new mills. Is that not the position?—I have offered to divide them into two halves and put them on double shifts alternately day and night, and give them higher wages.

A-2259. Have they refused that offer?—Yes.

A-2260. *The Chairman*: Following the questions of Sir Victor Sassoon, I quite appreciate the difficulty of the trade unions. Of course, their first duty is to look after the interests of their members, and they have apparently a fear which has not been confined to this country, that a change in the direction of improved methods of industry in some way was going to be harmful to their members. That has been a common occurrence in the development of industries in other countries as well as India.—Unfortunately to-day in India the labour unions feel—perhaps they have good grounds for doing so—that employers do not want trade union movements in India.

A-2261. Quite so.—The employers feel that if the trade union movement develops they will make a loss and not be able to run the industry. Whatever that may be, under the present circumstances it is rather difficult to progress until things settle down.

A-2262. That again is not peculiar to India?—No.

A-2263. That has been the case in other countries also?—But I wish that India should take a lesson from other countries and not go through needless suffering.

A-2264. That is exactly what I am leading up to. Here you have a peculiarly favourable situation. At any rate you have a larger percentage of workers represented in the union than in other cotton centres.—But only in the ring department.

A-2265. But the changes with regard to improved efficiency apply only to the ring department?—They apply to the weaving department also.

A-2266. I think a man can certainly look after more looms in finer counts. Taking weaving and spinning together, is it not true that you have here a more widespread organization of the workers than in other centres? A large percentage of your workers are organized?—That is so. They are permanently organized, unlike in Bombay where they have periodical organizations.

A-2267. In addition to that you have constant contact between the representatives of the Union and the employers?—I do not know anything about the Association of Millowners.

A-2268. You yourself are in direct contact with the officials of the Union and discussing these questions constantly with them?—We do.

A-2269. You have also what I have not observed yet in other places in India, a permanent arrangement for final arbitration in cases of dispute?—That is so.

A-2270. You have these conditions here which are so far peculiar to Ahmedabad. Do you not think, therefore, that if further discussion takes place and, if as suggested by you, your proposal for a 100 per cent. organization of the union is accepted by them, you may hope to come to an agreement which would have their good will and support?—I tried for that in the Association and I did not succeed.

A-2271. You have not given up trying?—I then left the Association. I tried to organize the thing on the basis of bringing about an agreement that the Association should keep only Union men and that the Labour Union men must work only in the mills of the Association. Then there would be a greater unity in the two camps. That would have been an additional advantage. But that was not acceptable.

A-2272. But you are still continuing your effort to arrive at an understanding.—I do not know whether there is an understanding or not. We yield very often to avoid any rupture or trouble. We often give in. If we have given in 2 or 3 times, we appeal to them to give in once or twice. That is how we do in a majority of cases.

A-2273. All that I am suggesting is that your proposals are so interesting and at first sight carry so much advantage to both parties, that you should persist in your efforts and hope to obtain the co-operation of the Union in course of time.—I am discussing a separate agreement on this basis.

A-2274. You are?—In the beginning the millowners greatly misunderstood that. The labour union wanted to use me as a precedent for other people. They tried to impose impossible terms with the result that the whole thing fell through.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. MESWANE, Mr. KANTEKAR and Mr. MANOHAR,
Representatives of the Textile Brotherhood, Ahmedabad.

A-2275. *The Chairman* : Mr. Kantekar, you have been good enough to submit to us a memorandum on behalf of the Textile Brotherhood. You have also just handed to us a supplementary memorandum in which you tell us that your Textile Brotherhood was started on the 5th July last year. You give an interesting account of your purpose in forming this brotherhood, and I notice that the members of it are, in all cases, managers, weaving masters or spinning masters engaged in the textile mills. Your knowledge and experience in those capacities will be valuable to us on some of the points which we are considering and I may perhaps put to you one or two questions arising out of your memorandum. The first point is a very interesting one, already under our notice, namely that of the question of jobbers in factories. You tell us that "A jobber is in no way better than a buffer between officers and labour so far as the labour supply is concerned. His value as a mechanic is nil and hence the system is defective." I would like to have your view as to how you would improve on the present system. For instance, do you suggest that jobbers could be done away with altogether, or do you suggest that their power and influence should be diminished?—(Mr. Kantekar.) Their function as suppliers of labour should cease. They should merely be confined to attending to the machinery.

A-2276. What would you suggest as regards the control and engagement of labour?—There should be a public employment agency.

A-2277. How would that deal with the workmen who attend at the gates of the factory?—We have already stated that "Apprentice classes for different lines of textile industry should be maintained by public corporations and conducted by technical experts in different branches to supply adequate labour. The present primary school should be advantageously extended and the above training classes should be attached to them."

A-2278. But if you are going to wait for that great improvement in education it would mean waiting a long time?—Yes, but a beginning will have to be made.

A-2279. Then do you suggest that no improvement is possible in the jobber system until that improvement in education has been attained?—There is no possibility of

improvement under the present conditions. In a decade or so there should be a better supply of educated labour.

A-2280. I am sure my Commission would like to be able to make a suggestion on the matter which would not mean a decade before it could be carried out?—It is regrettable, but under the present conditions we do not see how there can be any improvement in the system.

A-2281. We have been told in some of the mills that there has been an attempt made to diminish the power of the jobber and to cure this system of taking bribes by the institution of an employment officer. Have you experience in any of the mills where an employment officer has been engaged?—No.

A-2282. Therefore you are not in a position to tell us whether that experiment has diminished the evils of the jobber system or not?—No, I cannot say.

A-2283. Do you think such a system would remove some of the difficulties experienced at present?—I have no experience in the matter.

A-2284. You do not yourself engage any of the labour?—Directly we do not.

A-2285. You have to take the labour which is provided by the jobber?—Yes, and we have to make a selection so far as efficiency is concerned, as we are responsible for the production.

A-2286. You tell us that provision for old age is quite essential, and that it should be on the lines of the Indian Railway institutions. By that I take it you refer to the provident fund?—Yes, or gratuities.

A-2287. Is there no such system in any of the mills here?—None.

A-2288. Do you think it would be practicable and desirable to institute provident funds in the textile mills?—Yes.

A-2289. Dealing with the subject of physical exhaustion, you say that more than one interval should be given if food facilities are to be had in the mills. Does that mean you would like to have a half-hour break in the morning?—Every three hours. After two hours we find the conditions of the Department are such that the nerves of the workmen require resting.

A-2290. Then instead of one hour in the middle of the day you suggest two intervals, each of half an hour?—Yes, but that will only be workable if some convenience is provided in the mill premises, because the workers cannot go to their homes and get back again within half an hour.

A-2291. You think that in the first of these intervals there should be provision made for food?—Yes.

A-2292. Do you think that would add to the total efficiency of the worker during the day?—Yes.

A-2293. Is not that possible under the present Factory Act with the consent of the worker?—Yes, but it is not workable because the workmen themselves do not agree.

A-2294. Why do they not agree?—Because they cannot go to their homes and get back again in half an hour.

A-2295. Would they be in favour of it if there was accommodation provided for them in the mills?—Yes.

A-2296. If canteen accommodation was provided on the mill premises, you think the workers would prefer the double break system?—Yes.

A-2297. And that it would also add to their total efficiency and lessen their exhaustion in their day's work?—Yes. We recognize that it would be a difficult task for the employers to arrange for the time, owing to the question of caste.

A-2298. How many different arrangements would that involve?—Four or five different arrangements would have to be made on account of the caste question.

A-2299. You say that no legal enactment for the payment of wages not later than a certain number of days after they have been earned is necessary?—No regulation is necessary in Ahmedabad.

A-2300. You are satisfied with the present system of fortnightly payments?—Yes.

A-2301. Have you considered the possibility of a weekly payment of wages?—We wanted to try it but the labourers were not in favour of it.

A-2302. *Mr. Clow*: You say that recruitment is 65 per cent. from the U. P. side. You do not mean by that, do you, that 65 per cent. of the employees in the mills come from the United Provinces?—By U. P. we mean only the northern side.

A-2303. The Millowners' Association told us that about 80 per cent. came from Ahmedabad and the neighbourhood—say 50 miles round about. You say only 10 per cent. from local and surrounding villages?—That is our experience.

A-2304. Are there only 10 per cent. Gujratis in the mills?—We have limited ourselves to Ahmedabad proper and ten miles radius.

A-2305. You state that the system of paying wages is found defective. What are the difficulties to which you allude?—In certain sections there is no regular booking in the timekeepers' office, and the labourer has no proof of his attendance at the mill or of the hours he has worked.

A-2306. Are there many complaints?—There are none at present, but it is a loophole in the system which, we think, should not be allowed.

A-2307. You say that in the Spinning Department there is no system of fining. Do you mean there is no fining at all, or do you mean that the weavers are treated more severely than the spinners in this respect?—Yes, that is what we mean.

A-2308. You have given some figures of indebtedness in your memorandum. Are those your own figures, or they have been collected by the Factory Inspector?—We have depended on the Inspector's Report.

A-2309. These figures suggest that the more a man's income rises the greater is his debt in proportion. Is it a fact that as a man's credit rises, his debts tend to rise too? It has been suggested to us that if wages were raised the debt would diminish?—No, we differ from that suggestion.

A-2310. *Mr. Joshi*: You say there is no unemployment amongst skilled labourers. Do your mills close on certain days?—No.

A-2311. You have work for every machine all the year round?—Yes.

A-2312. You state that there is no voluntary retirement. What happens to the men when they become old?—If they are unable to work they absent themselves. Until then they have got to work. Therefore there is no voluntary retirement.

A-2313. We have been told that there is no unemployment in Ahmedabad, but I see that workers appear before the gates of the mills every morning?—Yes, that is so.

A-2314. Do you put up the piece-work rates in your mills?—Yes.

A-2315. Would you have any objection to making such a practice compulsory for all mills?—Why should there be legislation when it is already there.

A-2316. How do you fix the rates for new varieties?—We first of all make tests and then we fix the rate.

A-2317. During the test period the rate is not put up?—No, it is not. But it is put up before the man is paid his wages.

A-2318. You say that a reduction of the maximum hours of work is possible only if the working conditions are improved. Will you explain what kind of improvements you want in the working conditions?—(Mr. Manohar) Better temperature, better spacing of machinery, more up-to-date appliances and labour saving machinery.

A-2319. Can you state whether the reduction in hours from 12 to 10 has caused any reduction in output?—(Mr. Kantekar). There has been no loss of efficiency so far as weaving is concerned.

A-2320. *The Chairman*: Does that mean that in ten hours a weaver turns out as much cloth as he used to do in twelve hours?—Yes.

A-2321. What about spinning?—The output has gone down about 5 per cent.

A-2322. *Mr. Joshi*: You fix the minimum wage of a worker at Rs. 20. Will he be able to maintain a family on Rs. 20?—No. Rs. 20 represents the living wage of one man only.

A-2323. You state that the spinners are paid fortnightly. Am I correct in my impression that in Ahmedabad a fortnight varies. It may mean 12 days, or 14 days, or 16 days?—It is 16 days in all cases.

A-2324. We have been told that so far as efficiency is concerned, Indians do not come up to the standard of Europeans, and therefore the employment of Europeans becomes necessary. I take it that in the textile industry there is competition between Indians and Europeans for the posts of foremen. Do you find that the Indian foreman can compete successfully with the European foreman?—(Mr. Meswanel). Yes.

A-2325. Is it your experience that the number of European foremen in the textile industry is becoming less on account of that competition?—Yes, and they are now working on less pay than they were getting before.

A-2326. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is that the reason the industry is not doing so well ?—No.

A-2327. *Miss Power* : You advocate a public employment agency. By whom should it be run ?—By the Municipality.

A-2328. *Miss Cama* : You state in your memorandum that the medical men have not much sympathy for the poor. What exactly do you mean ?—The medical man goes to the mill for one hour, during which time he has to treat very many cases. Therefore in one hour he cannot give the sympathetic treatment to the labourers which he ought to give.

A-2329. You mean to say that the medical man does not treat every case ?—No, he has not the time.

A-2330. You think there ought to be a wholetime doctor ?—Yes.

A-2331. You do not really mean that the medical man is unsympathetic ?—We have seen some cases where the medical man has lacked sympathy for the labourers (Mr. Kantekar). He is only one hour at his dispensary, and naturally, when he has 50 cases to dispose of during that time, he cannot give proper attention to every one, and that is why the labour says that the medical man is unsympathetic.

A-2332. But that is not the medical man's fault ?—It is not the fault of the medical man, but the result is there, namely, that the labourers do not get proper sympathy.

A-2333. *Mr. Asarle* : You say that the minimum living wage for one man is Rs. 20. What would be the minimum living wage of a family consisting of a man and his wife, the father and one child ?—Rs. 40 to Rs. 42.

A-2334. *Mr. Lalji* : With regard to indebtedness, do you think that one cause of the labourer's indebtedness is the fact that he sometimes spends a little more than he can afford for death and marriage ceremonies ?—That is one of the causes of his indebtedness.

A-2335. With regard to the introduction of co-operative societies, you will agree that the labour in the mills is not very permanent, that is to say, a man may remain there for two or three years and then go away ?—Yes.

A-2336. How can you form a co-operative society under those conditions ?—Once a man becomes a member he will still continue to be a member whether he works in one mill or in another mill.

A-2337. Who will run these co-operative societies ?—We could easily raise a loan from the owners of the mills and start them ourselves.

A-2338. Do you want a co-operative society for every mill, or for a group of mills ?—A group of mills.

A-2339. You say that a provident fund should be provided by the millowners, but do you not think the difficulty of the labour being less permanent would arise in this connection also ?—There should be a stipulated period. For the first two years the employee should contribute himself. After two years the employer should contribute. If the labourer goes away during the first two years, he would withdraw his own money. If he went away after the first two years he would also take away the additional contribution of the employer.

A-2340. What would be the position of *budlis* ?—They would not be entitled to any benefit.

A-2341. *Col. Russell* : You stated in reply to a previous question that you want a full-time medical officer in these mills. For what size of mill do you suggest there should be a full-time medical officer ?—It would be a group of seven mills of 600 looms and 24,000 spindles each.

A-2342. Under the supervision of one medical officer ?—Yes.

A-2343. How many hours a day do you expect the medical officer to work ?—Three hours in the morning and two hours in the evening.

A-2344. How could a medical man possibly visit seven mills ?—In a group of mills there would be a dispensary.

A-2345. You would have a central dispensary ?—Yes.

A-2346. How many workers in the group of mills that you envisage ?—About 5,000.

A-2347. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You state that you are not in favour of unemployment insurance. Has any census been taken in Ahmedabad as regards unemployment ?—No.

A-2348. Have you instituted any scientific enquiries into the prevalence of unemployment in Ahmedabad ?—No.

A-2349. It is merely your opinion that there is no unemployment in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2350. An opinion which is not fortified by statistics ?—No.

A-2351. With reference to your figure of Rs. 20 as a minimum wage for a male labourer, did you work out that figure on any information supplied to you ?—We made personal enquiries from workmen.

A-2352. Can you supply the Commission with a statement of the details ?—Yes.

The Chairman : It must be remembered that this association only began last year, and although they have given us interesting information and opinions we must have regard to the fact that their experience is not yet very great.

A-2353. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : You state that the co-operative system is an aid to efficiency. What exactly do you mean ?—(Mr. Manohar). We mean that the spinning and weaving masters should have sufficient confidence in their jobbers, and that the jobbers should have sufficient confidence in their men without having to put other men to watch their movements and work.

A-2354. You mean that there should be co-operation between the staff ?—Yes.

A-2355. Was any attempt made to discuss the matter of weekly payments with the existing labour union, as to its desirability or otherwise ?—(Mr. Kantekar). We do not know.

A-2356. You say that an 8 hours' day is not feasible. Why not ?—Because it would increase the cost of production.

A-2357. You say it is not feasible simply from that point of view ?—Yes.

A-2358. Do you agree that it would increase the efficiency of the worker ?—Yes.

A-2359. *Mr. Cliff* : Do I understand that advances are given each week ?—Each week after the pay is due.

A-2360. Assume that a man commences work on the 1st of November. Do I understand that his pay for the period finishes on November the 16th ?—No, the 24th.

A-2361. The period for which he is paid is 16 days ?—Yes.

A-2362. And he gets paid for that on the 24th ?—Yes.

A-2363. What advances is a man likely to get during that period ?—He will get no advances between November the 1st and November the 24th.

A-2364. In what circumstances are advances given ?—Whenever they are asked for by the worker they are given.

A-2365. Are those advances against pay ?—Yes, against the pay due.

A-2366. Are they deducted at the time the payment is made ?—Yes.

A-2367. Do I understand that they get 25 per cent. of the wages due ?—About 50 per cent.

A-2368. Then they can get an advance of 50 per cent. against their pay ?—Yes.

A-2369. Is that taken once or twice ?—Once only.

A-2370. What do they take these advances for ?—For their household expenses, or drink or holidays or ceremonies.

A-2371. Do the work-people employed in the mills of which you have experience, spend very much money on drink ?—Yes, they do if the drink shops are quite close to the mills. The food waits.

A-2372. Do a very large number of work-people spend their money on drink ?—More than 80 per cent. I should say.

A-2373. Does that apply to men and women ?—It applies only very little to women.

A-2374. How much money would these 80 per cent. spend in drink on pay day ?—I cannot tell you, not being a drunkard myself.

A-2375. You know that 80 per cent. of the people go to the drink shop and the food waits ?—Yes.

A-2376. But you do not know what they spend ?—No.

A-2377. Would it be true to say that the factory has to close down the day after pay day because the labour is not there ?—No, that is not generally the case.

A-2378. After pay day is there any difficulty about the employment of labour at all ?—No.

A-2379. Is there any difficulty about the employment of labour on pay day ?—No.

A-2380. *Mr. Ahmed* : What is the percentage of Muhammadan labourers in Ahmedabad ?—25.

A-2381. Has your Brotherhood any Muhammadan members ?—Yes.

A-2382. Have you tried to stop drinking amongst them ?—We do not drink.

A-2383. I see your Brotherhood has some weaving masters in it. Are they in favour of drink ?—No.

A-2384. Do they speak to the workers about the evils of drink ?—Each of us individually try to improve the conditions in our own mills.

A-2385. What sort of drink do the Muhammadans indulge in ?—I do not know what they drink.

A-2386. You say that there is a high death rate in the mill area. Is that due to the bad atmosphere prevailing there or to certain diseases ?—It is generally due to low vitality consequent upon poor housing, poor surroundings, and poor food.

A-2387. You are in favour of co-operative societies ?—Yes.

A-2388. You can get any number of labourers that you want through the jobber. There is competition amongst the workers to get employment. Is it not possible that there is a certain understanding between the jobber and the men ?—Underground currents are not always perceptible on the surface.

A-2389. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say that the efficiency of Indian workers in recent years has been gradually on the increase. Is that your experience in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2390. Does this apply to weavers and spinners ?—Yes, to weavers specially.

A-2391. In your memorandum you say that Indian labour is less efficient than foreign labour because they are raw hands. What do you mean by "raw hands" ?—Indian labour which immigrates from up-country is raw.

A-2392. All labour coming into a mill for the first time is raw, but you have had workers working in your mills for generations, and they are not raw. Why do you say they are less efficient than foreign labour ?—Only the raw hands are inefficient.

A-2393. In the case of Indian labour, you say if it is given the same facilities as foreigners are provided with, it can still stand in competition with foreigners in efficiency ?—Yes.

A-2394. What are the facilities given to foreigners which are not given to your workers ?—If an Indian worker is transplanted from here to a foreign country, where the conditions are much better in comparison with those available here, he will show as much efficiency as any other foreign worker.

A-2395. You mean to say that if he were sent to Japan he would work as well as a Japanese would ?—Yes.

A-2396. And if he were sent to Manchester he would work as well as a Manchester worker would ?—Yes.

A-2397. Are you willing that the Indian worker should do the same amount of work as a Japanese or Manchester worker ?—He would do the same amount of work.

A-2398. Do you want him to work 4 looms or 14 looms instead of two ?—Under foreign conditions he would work as many looms as the other man was working.

A-2399. How many looms do you think an Indian worker is looking after here ?—Under present conditions he cannot work more than two.

A-2400. What about the spinning mills ?—He can now only work one side, but he could work three or four frames given the same facilities as foreigners.

A-2401. You spoke of certain improvements just now, in the way of labour saving appliances. What do you mean by labour saving appliances ?—Lifts, for instance. At present in our mills loads of material have to be carried from the ground floor to the top floor. Then there is spacing of machinery.

A-2402. Is not that a question of management ?—It is a question of money.

A-2403. Do you say that a weaver would be capable of working four looms if he were given a boy to bring the weft to the loom ?—Yes. He could work four looms if he had not continually to go outside to get the stuff.

A-2404. Are you in favour of the weavers here working four looms with a boy to help them ?—Not under present conditions. They must be supplied with better warps.

A-2405. Are you agreeable that your weavers should work four looms with the assistance of a boy ?—If they get better proportionate wages.

A-2406. What increase in wages would the weavers expect ?—Double perhaps.

A-2407. You are practical men. In your memorandum you say that you are directly responsible for the success or otherwise of the manufacturing process. Yet you maintain that the only way in which it is possible to get a weaver to work four looms

instead of two, with the assistance of a boy, is by paying him double the wages which he is now getting?—That is the attitude of the weavers. Our opinion is not that.

A-2408. What is your opinion?—The expenses entailed in providing better warp and better facilities have to be deducted in the first place.

A-2409. *The Chairman*: The only thing you would say is that the weavers should have a substantial part of the increase?—Yes.

A-2410. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What do the unions say in that connection?—There is no labour union in the Weaving Department.

A-2411. Take the Spinning. Do you agree that a spinner, given good yarn, can look after more spindles than he is looking after at present?—Even if he were paid double the wages which he is receiving at present, he would not be ready to work two sides, I think.

A-2412. Do you not think as practical men that they should be encouraged to work two sides?—Not under the conditions of 10 hours' working.

A-2413. How many hours would you suggest?—Nine hours.

A-2414. If they did nine hours, would you be agreeable to my proposition?—Not nine hours continuously.

A-2415. But the workers do not work continuously. Their day is a 10 hour day, but they are not actually attending to their looms for the whole 10 hours, are they? How many minutes do they spend outside?—They spend about 2 hours out of the 10 outside.

A-2416. *The Chairman*: But the spinning frames are running for the whole ten hours?—Yes.

A-2417. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Extra hands are employed to let these men go out. You speak about the oppressive climatic conditions. Why do you yourself work in these hot mills? Surely your primary object is to earn a living for yourself and your family?—Yes.

A-2418. *The Chairman*: The fact of your coming together to form an association shows us that it is your desire to co-operate in improving both the efficiency of your work for your employers and in improving the conditions for yourselves and your fellow-workers?—Yes.

A-2419. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You are very optimistic as to the efficiency of the Indian workman?—Yes.

A-2420. You maintain that if he is given suitable conditions, such as labour saving appliances, carrier systems, better warp, and so on, he can look after more machines than he does to-day?—And also if he is given a better climate.

A-2421. You do not consider it is feasible for a weaver to look after four looms unless he gets a better climate?—The whole question has to be tackled from top to bottom—better education, better housing and so forth.

A-2422. Unless everything you consider an Indian labourer wants is given to him, including an alteration in the climatic conditions of India, you think we cannot hope for any increase in the efficiency of the Indian workman in the textile industry: he must have education, better housing, new machines and a fresh climate before any improvement in the industry can be expected. Cannot we expect to get some extra efficiency without all these factors?—No.

A-2423. We cannot get any extra efficiency without all these factors?—No. If some of these grievances were removed we might get a little extra efficiency.

A-2424. Therefore we can get more efficiency without supplying all these factors?—Yes, if some of the factors were supplied.

A-2425. I am told that in Japan one weaver can look after 40 automatic looms and that one spinner can look after 6 to 8 sides. If all these factors which you name cannot be given to the Indian workman but only some, could it be expected that one Indian weaver could look after 20 automatic looms?—It depends on the conditions you offer him.

A-2426. I will offer him labour saving appliances, assistance for his weft, a ventilating system, all the conditions that an ordinary good employer would give inside the mill; but I cannot offer you things which are due to the Almighty, such as a better climate or things which might be given by the State or the Municipality. I would give him extra wages—not necessarily double wages—for looking after double the number of machines, as I have to take into account the fact that I should have to spend a lot of money on providing him with these extra facilities and additional help. Taking all these things into account, do you think, as practical men, that one might get at any rate some more efficiency out of the man?—Yes.

A-2427. I understand that one of the mills here is having two sides looked after by one spinner. If the conditions in that particular mill were employed in all the mills, would you say that one spinner could look after two sides everywhere?—Yes.

A-2428. And if I could show you a mill in Bombay in which one man is looking after four looms, would you consider that in Ahmedabad one man could look after four looms under similar conditions?—Yes, but the payment question comes in.

A-2429. I am assuming that the man would be paid more for looking after four looms, but not double?—It should be substantially more.

A-2430. Would you say 50 per cent. more?—It should be 75 per cent. more.

A-2431. You want 75 per cent. more wages to be paid in that event. Have you ever worked out what the cost would be to enable an employer to provide all the conditions which you have named in order that a man might look after four looms instead of two?—No.

A-2432. Might it not be that the employer under these conditions might be worse off than he was before?—But the man would be producing more.

A-2433. Yes, but the net cost of production might be higher?—That would have to be seen. Perhaps it might not increase the cost of production.

A-2434. You want the employer to put in all these extra facilities and yet to give the whole of his savings to the workman?—If possible the cost of production must be lowered.

A-2435. But how can it be if the employer has to give 75 per cent. more in wages? Do you know that in other countries generally 30 per cent. of the net saving is given to the labourer? You want, however, the employer to give 75 per cent. of the gross?—Yes.

A-2436. Now about the question of the jobber. When you, as head of the Department, want extra labour, do you not go first to the mill gate?—Some men stand at the gates.

A-2437. The present system is that the jobber goes and fetches those men for you to look at and select?—Yes.

A-2438. Would you have any objection to a man being specially employed by your Company to bring those men to you, and do away with the jobber?—If such a man had sufficient experience about the worker's capacity for the work, I would have no objection.

A-2439. I take it he would have no way of finding out the man's capability unless he knew him. Take yourself. Suppose you go down to the gate, and you find two men standing there: how are you going to tell how good they are until you have tried them?—Quite so.

A-2440. Therefore if you are going to try them there is no reason why you should not have an officer of the mill to go down and fetch them?—There would be a likelihood of getting in altogether useless labour.

A-2441. Supposing you kept a register of your labour, and supposing that every time a man went away his name was put down with the particulars of what he could do. If an officer of the mill found one of these men who had left coming back again later and applying for a job, he could merely look up the record, he would see all the particulars of what the man could do, and he would say to the man, "I know you are a good man; start at once"?—Yes.

A-2442. He could do that by merely looking up the records. There would be no necessity for him to be an expert?—Quite so.

A-2443. And it would take away from the jobber the power which he now possesses and to which you object?—Yes, but such an officer must understand the work inside the mill.

A-2444. He need not be a very highly technical man?—No, but he would have to be highly practical.

A-2445. All you want is a man practical enough to pick out a weaver, as well as a spinner?—Yes.

A-2446. Therefore it is not necessary to wait for education, and for all the other things you have named, in order to do away with the jobber. You could have this man to do that part of the jobber's work?—Yes.

A-2447. You think that such a system would be possible?—Yes. It would be preferable.

A-2448. Supposing your employer said to you: "This is what I am going to do." Would you be in favour of it?—Yes.

A-2449. Do you know that one employer has tried to do that, but his managing staff has objected to it?—I do not know that.

A-2450. You ask for a provident fund to be established. Do you want that to be for every employee, or only for employees earning a certain amount?—We want it for all permanent labour.

A-2451. For coolies ?—Yes, for everybody.

A-2452. You want these people to have a certain amount deducted from their wages and put into the provident fund ?—Yes.

A-2453. Do you anticipate that they will be prepared to agree to this ?—Yes.

A-2454. But supposing a man says he does not want to have any cuts made from his pay ?—To begin with there might be some difficulty, just as men do not become members of unions to start with.

A-2455. Would you force them to become members ?—We would persuade them, not force them.

A-2456. Would you have a provident fund which would be available for all those employees who cared to take advantage of it ?—Yes.

A-2457. You ask that the interval should be divided into two half-hour intervals instead of one one-hour interval ?—Yes.

A-2458. Personally I agree with you. Would you ask that that should be done by law ?—Perhaps the workers would have to be prepared for it.

A-2459. Supposing the workers object to such a division ?—We would listen to their objections and we would try to convince them.

A-2460. What would happen if you fail ?—Then it would stand as it is.

A-2461. Therefore there would be no efficiency ?—Quite so.

A-2462. Does the worker in Ahmedabad take his meal in the middle of the day ?—Yes.

A-2463. In Bombay they take their food in the morning. Do they do so in Ahmedabad ?—They take it at about the middle of the day.

A-2464. They do not take it during the break ?—No, during the rest hour, 12 to 1, they do not take their food here.

A-2465. What would be your objection, therefore, to having a half-hour break in the middle of the day, if the workers do not take their food ?—Some of the labourers have to go to their places to get their food.

A-2466. But they do not take it between 12 and 1. They take it during the morning ?—Some of the labourers go outside to take their meals at their homes from 12 to 1.

A-2467. It must be a very small percentage ?—Not very small—25.

A-2468. Do you say that 25 per cent. of the work-people do not take their food until 12 o'clock ?—Yes.

A-2469. Is that the custom in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2470. They take no food up to 12 o'clock from the night before ?—In the morning when they come they take some breakfast early in the morning. Then they go at 12, cook their food and come back again at 1.

A-2471. You suggest that 25 per cent. do that ?—Yes.

A-2472. Most of the others do not do that ?—No.

A-2473. I understand you to say that the cotton should be tested scientifically. By whom ? By the Government ?—Inside the mill itself.

A-2474. You want the mill to arrange to test the cotton ?—Yes.

A-2475. That is not a matter for the Government, but a matter for the mill agent ?—Yes.

A-2476. Your complaint, therefore, is against the mill agent ?—We complain against the general system.

A-2477. You complain that your mill agent does not test the cotton before he hands it over to you ?—That is so in many mills.

A-2478. The custom here is not to test the cotton before it is supplied to you. Is that your complaint ?—Yes.

A-2479. Is it true that most of the stores which are used in Ahmedabad are inferior—that you buy cheap inferior stores ?—In some cases.

A-2480. As a rule ?—As a rule the store is cheaper here than in Bombay.

A-2481. Therefore you expect to get inferior stores ?—Yes.

A-2482. You think it is true to say that the stores used in Ahmedabad mills are, on the whole, inferior to the ones used in Bombay ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

TWENTIETH MEETING

AHMEDABAD

Monday, 18th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S.
(*Medical Assessor*).Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C., *Assistant Commissioner*.

Lady V. R. NILKANTH.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } *Lady Assessors.*Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
Mr. A. DIBDIN.Col. B. H. NANAVATI, C.I.E., Vice-President of the
Sanitary Association, Ahmedabad.A-2483. *The Chairman* : You are the Vice-President of the Sanitary Association ?—
Yes.

A-2484. We had the pleasure of your attendance last week. I understand you want to put in an additional statement before the Commission. Will you do so?—This is merely an amplification of the answers already given by the Secretary. The dwellings of the mill operatives are very imperfect and insufficient in number and in many cases unfit for human habitation. They are in most cases dark, dingy, little cottages, where air can only enter in through the small main door. I consider it the first duty of the millowners, and to some extent of the municipality, which is responsible for the health of the city, to provide cheap sanitary dwellings for the mill operatives and the poorer people of the labouring classes. Government should also give a helping hand in this direction as far as possible.

As regards the physique of the millworkers, I am of opinion that, generally speaking, it is not quite so good as that of the labourers of a similar class but not working in the mills. The latter have the advantage of working in the open, whereas the former have often to work in more or less closed rooms which are often not well ventilated.

The question regarding drainage in the suburban area was discussed to some extent last time, and I wish to add a few more notes regarding the subject. The construction of drainage in the mill areas is another important subject intimately connected with the health and well being of the operatives of the city in general, which the municipality, with the assistance of the millowners and the agents, should take in hand as early as possible. As mentioned by me on the previous occasion, a conference of the representatives of the municipality and of the millowners was held about two or two and a half years ago under my chairmanship with a view to discuss this important subject.

Some of the millowners agreed to pay a certain proportion of the cost towards the construction of the drainage. All the millowners were not represented at the conference, and therefore no practical conclusion was arrived at beyond the passing of a resolution that a drainage scheme be prepared. I am personally of opinion—and some of the millowners share that opinion—that all the millowners ought to bear a reasonable proportion of the cost of this suburban drainage and if all parties meet with one common aim and object, without taking into consideration the individual interests of the mills, the solution of this important problem ought not to be a difficult one.

The present system of collecting the waste water from mills in adjoining tanks and ditches and then occasionally letting it out into the surrounding areas where the dwellings of some of the mill operatives and other poor people are generally situated, is a serious menace to their health and should be put a stop to as early as possible, as it is responsible to some extent for the abnormal mortality which prevails in the city.

Further, the mortality could be considerably reduced if the municipality in the interests of the city would undertake welfare and maternity work. This city is considerably behind many other cities of equal proportions in this respect. In fact this municipality has done nothing in the matter, and the scheme to institute welfare work and health visitors which was put forward by me jointly with Dr. Solomon about two years ago was not accepted by the municipality. The establishment of ante-natal clinics by the municipality, where women could be examined and advised from time to time during the period of their pregnancy and till the period of their delivery, would prove of considerable value in lessening both infant and maternal mortality. Many diseases, the root cause of severe illness of various kinds, could thus be detected and treated beforehand and the disastrous results which we now occasionally come across, would be avoided. The appointment of a health visitor or visitors is another very important necessity with a view to educate the public on general principles of health and sanitation. This is particularly needed in a place like Ahmedabad where the mortality, both general and infantile, is, as is well known, abnormally high.

With a view to improving the health of the city, I think it very necessary that the municipality should carry on certain important works and which ought to have been carried out years ago. A brief mention of these is all that is possible here.

The removal of all animals—horses, cattle, cows, etc.—which are now unfortunately and for years and years past have been kept stabled within the city walls for trade purposes. The by-laws relating to the building of stables and observance of cleanliness inside them are seldom enforced, and therefore there is not only a huge collection of refuse within the city walls to the great detriment of the public health but the organic matter emanating from it is a source of great danger. Also for want of adequate drainage to carry away the urine of these animals, the urine generally soaks into the ground and gives out a very offensive effluvia which cannot but have a detrimental effect on the health of the people in the neighbourhood. I must add that just a beginning, a mere step, for the removal of cattle—cows and buffaloes only—from the city has just been made, and it is to be hoped that the scheme will be sanctioned before long. But unless all the animals are removed from the city walls to a reasonable distance outside the city, this partial introduction of reform would hardly be a great advantage.

Tuberculosis, especially in the pulmonary form, is largely prevalent in this city. I have made a rough calculation from the number of patients who seek advice from me and I know that out of every eight patients generally one is a consumptive. This proportion was found to be almost correct as compared with the statistics contained in the Government reports which I consulted in connection with a series of public lectures that I gave some time ago on the subject. I am not quite prepared to say whether the disease is more prevalent amongst the millworkers than others, but it is a patent fact that it is very largely prevalent in the city. Amongst a number of causes which are responsible for this are overcrowded, dark and ill-ventilated dwellings of the poor people and absolute ignorance as to the mode of prevention of this disease. The congestion and overcrowding in the city can be removed only by developing the suburbs and providing facilities for people to live there.

A so-called hospital for infectious diseases is no doubt maintained by the municipality, but it is maintained mostly in name only. There is no permanent staff of servants or of nurses either. The building itself is a very miserable one and ill-equipped for the purpose. The prevention of disease is in many cases a simple and easy affair, and if the people were educated through the health visitors so far as to understand the causation of some of the simple diseases and the prevention of the mode of conveyance of infection from one person to another, a great step in the right direction would have been taken to reduce the mortality, and the great incidence of tubercular diseases in general.

The Chairman : We are obliged to you for your statement. It is evident to us that you are an enthusiast in health matters. I do not think that I can do more than add to what I said the other day that we are much interested in the work of your Association, particularly of those representatives of it whom we have seen, Dr. Solomon and yourself. You no doubt have noted that we were told by the millowners that they were prepared to do their share in the mills to which you have referred, not only through their rates but if need be through a special and additional contribution. It is not for us as a Commission to interfere with municipal government but we have no doubt that the work of your Association will be a valuable assistance in co-operating with the municipal authorities towards the carrying out of these improvements. Thank you very much.

(The witness withdrew.)

Miss DINA CAMA, Gujerat Constituency of All-India Women's Conference.

A-2485. *The Chairman* : You are the Joint Honorary Secretary of the Women's Council, Ahmedabad Branch ?—Yes.

A-2486. May I at the outset, on behalf of the Commission, say how much we value your co-operation in the work which is entrusted to us. We regard the interests of the women of India, in the work which we are called upon to perform, as of very high value ; and we are most pleased here, and elsewhere, to have the co-operation of Women's Associations, which are already taking such a large part in the improvement of the social life of the people of India.

I notice from your memorandum that your Association lays great stress on an improvement in the Land Acquisition Act. That has already been brought to our notice. I understand what you desire is that this Act should be extended so as to enable land to be acquired for anybody which is prepared to come forward for the improved housing of the people ?—Yes.

A-2487. With regard to Ahmedabad in particular, you say that the rate of mortality of children is very high, and you suggest that each mill should have, by law, a dispensary in charge of a qualified medical man who should always be on the spot ?—Yes.

A-2488. A number of the mills here do make some provision of this kind, but not all. I take it that you would wish that they should all be brought up to the standard of the best ?—Yes.

A-2489. You suggest that, with regard to welfare work generally in connection with the workers in the mills, that legislation is desirable in order to bring about a uniform standard ?—Yes.

A-2490. We have observed that some of the mills are doing admirable work in this direction. Do you think it is advisable to use the compulsion of the law in this matter rather than the persuasion which evidently is in operation at present ?—Compulsion is necessary.

A-2491. What would you wish to see provided by compulsory law in this respect ?—Crèches for children, maternity homes for women and schools for children.

A-2492. Do you regard it as the duty of the millowners to provide schools rather than the Municipality ?—The Government, the Municipality, and other associations should help to provide them.

A-2493. It has been suggested to us that it is not the duty of the millowners to do educational work, but that it is the duty of the Municipality. I take it your view is that the millowners have a special responsibility in the matter ?—Yes.

A-2494. With regard to hours of work, you suggest that the hours should be reduced from 10 hours a day to 9 hours a day ?—Our opinion is based on the welfare of the workers.

A-2495. You think a reduction of one hour would bring about a substantial improvement in the conditions of the worker ?—Yes.

A-2496. *Miss Power* : What do you consider is the minimum housing accommodation for a mill operative family ?—Two rooms, and one kitchen.

A-2497. Do you include bathing accommodation in one of those rooms ?—That should be provided in another room.

A-2498. It has been suggested to us that there is a great need for fore-women in factories. Are there fore-women employed in the mills in Ahmedabad, or only foremen?—I do not know.

A-2499. Have you any knowledge of the conditions of the workers in places that do not come under the Factories Act?—No.

A-2500. Have you considered as to whether they are such that they ought to be regulated by law?—No.

A-2501. With regard to the Maternity Act, is it operative in Ahmedabad?—Yes.

A-2502. Do you consider the Act suitable, or has your organization any suggestions to make?—It is suitable.

A-2503. *Dr. (Miss) Cama*: Would you like welfare work to be made compulsory?—Yes.

A-2504. *Mr. Asavle*: You stated that the minimum accommodation for a worker should be two rooms and a kitchen. What should be the rent for that accommodation?—Rs. 5 or 6.

A-2505. Do you think that, with the wages they are earning to-day, the workers can afford that rent?—Yes.

A-2506. What is the wage of the worker?—Between Rs. 25 and 30.

A-2507. You think that out of that she can afford to pay Rs. 5 or 6 for rent?—Yes.

A-2508. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to housing accommodation, we have had a memorandum put in which says that the minimum housing requirements per family are a kitchen, a living room, an open space in front of the house and a verandah, with adequate water facilities and proper sanitary arrangements. When you mentioned two rooms, was that the kind of house you were thinking of for a family?—Yes.

A-2509. May we take it that that constitutes the minimum housing requirements for a family?—Yes.

A-2510. The memorandum further says "At the present scale of wages, a workman cannot be expected to pay rent exceeding from Rs. 3 to 5 per month". Is that your opinion?—Rs. 5.

A-2511. Have you had any experience of the working class population of this city?—Yes.

A-2512. Can you tell me anything about the consumption of liquor by the working classes of this city? Is it very prevalent?—It is.

A-2513. What is your meaning of the word "prevalent"? Can you tell the Commission how common drinking is?—I am told by the women workers that nearly all the pay of their husbands is spent on liquor.

A-2514. You are told that in going round visiting?—Yes.

A-2515. Have you yourself seen any ill-effects upon workers here on account of drink?—I have seen very little myself.

A-2516. *Col. Russell*: You say that the housing of labour by industrial concerns has its disadvantages. I take it, therefore, that you are not altogether in favour of housing schemes being carried out by the millowners. What is your suggestion?—The municipality should undertake it.

A-2517. You say that no special provision for women doctors is made. Are women doctors available?—Yes.

A-2518. You disagree, then, with one of the witnesses, who said that he could not get a woman doctor, although he had advertised for months?—That is because they do not allow private practice. That is why the millowners do not get lady doctors.

A-2519. If you allowed a doctor attending mill labour also to practise privately, do you not think the tendency would be for the doctor to attend more to his private practice and to neglect the mill labour? How do you propose to get over that difficulty?—Government allows the doctors in the civil hospitals to practise privately.

A-2520. Are there a sufficient number of trained midwives available in Ahmedabad supposing large maternity schemes were introduced?—Yes.

A-2521. You could get enough midwives to attend to the wives of the workers for the whole of the mills in Ahmedabad?—There are plenty.

A-2522. Would you have full-time workers, or would you allow them also private practice?—They should be full-time workers, and not allowed private practice.

A-2523. You would allow the doctors to have private practice, but not the midwives ? Would the midwives, supposing you were able to get them, be able to compete with the indigenous *dais* ?—Yes.

A-2524. You think the women workers would make use of these trained midwives in preference to the *dais* ?—Yes.

A-2525. I suppose you know that in most parts of India the *dais* are preferred ? In connection with welfare you say "If any public agency were prepared to carry on the work." What public agency do you suggest should carry out welfare work ?—The municipality.

A-2526. You would have no Association, such as your Association, associated with it ?—Yes, the Sanitary Association.

A-2527. Do you think that would be satisfactory ?—Yes.

A-2528. In about half the mills in Ahmedabad we are told that medical aid is provided. It is suggested that medical aid should be provided for all the mills. What arrangements would you suggest for the provision of medical aid for all the workers in Ahmedabad ?—There should be legislation to enforce it.

A-2529. Supposing that legislation were brought into effect, what arrangement would you suggest would be the best ? Would you have one medical officer for each mill, or one medical officer for a group of mills ?—One medical officer for each mill.

A-2530. Do you think, apart from the difficulty of retaining a sufficient number of medical officers (I understand there are 83 mills in Ahmedabad), that each mill would be able to afford the salary of a properly trained medical officer for itself ?—Yes.

A-2531. I understand that the civil hospital and other dispensaries are closed on Sundays, and that they are closed at about 6 o'clock on week nights, so that they are not available for the workers, generally speaking. Have you any suggestions to make as to how that difficulty might be got over ?—They should be open in the evenings.

A-2532. Then would you suggest that they should be closed during the day for a certain number of hours ?—They are closed for certain hours during the day.

A-2533. Which hours ?—I do not know.

A-2534. Is it not a fact that a patient can be admitted to the civil hospital at any hour during the 24 hours ?—Indoor patients can be taken in at any time.

A-2535. It has been stated that the system of employing *dais* in Municipal employment is not effective. Can you tell us why that is so ?—It is due to the ignorance of the people.

A-2536. You think the Municipality ought to employ trained midwives instead of *dais* ?—The people are ignorant. The midwives are trained.

A-2537. So they do not use the trained midwives ?—No.

A-2538. But you have said that they would use these trained midwives ?—If the mill-owners provided them.

A-2539. Can you tell us what articles of diet the average worker uses for his morning and evening meals ?—I do not know.

A-2540. You have not made any investigation into the matter ?—No.

A-2541. Do you think that provision ought to be made for the worker during periods of sickness ?—Yes.

A-2542. Do you know anything of the methods used by the Certifying Surgeon in connection with young labour ?—No.

A-2543. *Mr. Ahmed* : You say that the women workers drink ?—No. I said the husbands of the women drink.

A-2544. Has your organization undertaken any propaganda in the matter ?—No.

A-2545. Do you not think it advisable that your organization should do so ?—Yes.

A-2546. There has been some agitation in other countries that women should not work in mines or do labour of that sort.—What is your opinion ?—We are against it also.

A-2547. Has your organization taken any steps towards that end ?—No.

A-2548. Has your organization taken any steps, such as passing resolutions and forwarding them to Government, with regard to compulsory education ?—No.

A-2549. Perhaps your organization is a very young one ?—It has been in existence ten years.

A-2550. Do you think that housing accommodation should be provided for workers by the millowners?—That is our opinion.

A-2551. Have you taken any action in the matter, by correspondence or discussions with the millowners?—No, we have not.

A-2552. *Piwan Chaman Lall* : You say that living expenses are not prohibitive in Ahmedabad. What do you mean by that?—They are less than in Bombay.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. N. D. MEHTA, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Ahmedabad Municipality.

A-2553. *The Chairman* : Mr. Mehta, I understand that you were for some years the Chief Officer of the Municipality?—Yes. During my 33 years' service I have served the municipality for 18 years—10 years in Ahmedabad, 3 years in Bandra and 5 years in Bombay.

A-2554. And what are you now?—I am a retired officer both from Government and also from the Bombay Corporation.

A-2555. You are an elected member of the council?—No, I am a nominated member on the municipality, and from the 9th of this month I have taken up the office of Chairman of the Standing Committee.

A-2556. We have a letter from the President of your Council kindly saying that you are well equipped to answer any questions which we may desire to put you?—It is very kind of him to say so. My evidence will be confined to those issues with which the local authority is connected with the labour, like housing, maternity benefits and such other things. The statistical portion so far as the Municipality is concerned may be of some use to your Commission; that is to say, what the Municipality has done up to now and what it intends to do in its programme, if you choose to have this information. It has been argued that the Municipality is not doing its proper duty in the matter of housing.

A-2557. That is the reason why we have asked you to come before us to-day. I am accustomed to think always that there are two sides to a question, and therefore since we have heard a certain amount of criticism of the Municipality we thought it desirable to have some one who could speak with some authority for the other side?—I thank you for giving me this opportunity of trying to explain the position of the Municipality.

A-2558. Would you wish to make a statement?—Yes. I will deal with the question of housing first. The Municipality is after all a created body of the statute. Up to 1925 when the City Municipalities Act, 1925, came into operation here, we had no power under the old District Municipal Act, III of 1921, to undertake any housing scheme, or to spend money on the construction of buildings for the poorer classes. The new Act came into operation in June 1926, and only three years have run since then. What we have done is practically under the old Town Planning Act of 1915 as it was not possible to take such action under the Bombay District Municipal Act. Under the Bombay Town Planning Act, we have launched about four town planning schemes. The first is now final and that is the Jamalpur town planning scheme. Therein we have provided 16 acres of land for housing working-classes people; by 'working-classes' we mean not only mill labourers but mechanics, artisans and persons not working for wages but engaged in trade, handicraft, agriculture and not employing other than members of their own family, and persons whose income does not exceed on an average Rs. 75. With this view, the original idea was that we should acquire 16 acres of land in the Jamalpur town planning scheme so that the Municipality might house either their own employees or mill labourers, if possible. Later on the owners of the land said that they would themselves construct new buildings in that area and requested us to reserve it for this specific purpose. We agreed, and the arbitrator Mr. Mirams also agreed that as long as private owners were prepared to develop their lands, the local authority should not come into the field as a rival body. This scheme was sanctioned finally by Government in 1925 or thereabout. Since then no development has been made by private owners. We, therefore, desire to take away this land from the owners under the Land Acquisition Act, paying them such compensation as is due to them, and we intend to construct model sanitary houses or *chawls* in that area which would be our own property.

Board might object, I know. The Taxation Enquiry Committee have also laid down that in big centres this kind of tax is equitable. I would therefore suggest that if such a body is created, Government can fairly depend upon that body for utilizing that source of revenue for floating a loan of about 15 to 20 lakhs, irrespective of what its future rental revenue would be. If this body executes all the various kinds of schemes such as, housing the poor, housing the mill labour, improving the existing bad areas, removing the bad *chauls* as they are now existent, then within a decade or so the whole responsibility may be transferred to the original corporation from which this daughter body may be created. I know that the City Improvement Trust of Bombay is now working at a serious loss and has a great debt to pay, but practically all the improvements of Bombay are mainly due to that body's activities. There is a feeling that it should be taken away by the Corporation—I myself advocated that it should be amalgamated—but if freedom of execution in a democratic body is not possible by a large body but by a small compact body, that itself is a good excuse for the continuance of the small body. This is the aspect which I put before you for such consideration as it deserves.

As regards health activities and the money spent, we have got 10 midwives, employed from the municipal fund, who attended free of charge about 11,000 delivery cases and paid 7,244 visits to the mill labourers of the area during the last year. We are going to have one maternity hospital out of the donation of Seth Chimanlal Nagindas Chinoy, and a hospital of Seth Wadilall Sarabhai. We aid 12 medical institutions of which one is an *Ayurvedic* dispensary. This is the position so far as medical relief is concerned. I do admit that Ahmedabad does not spend as it ought to spend on medical relief. The statistics which I have collected of big towns of the Presidency and also of other towns show that where there is a big capital programme as in Bombay, the running expenditure is comparatively less. The city of Bombay spends 35·8 per cent. of its total expenditure on debt charges—paying interest and sinking fund instalments. The result is that its revenue expenditure for various services is less compared with Ahmedabad and Karachi. Our debt charges are 9·3, and Karachi 9 while 35 is the figure for Bombay. The result is that the cost of general administration in Bombay is 6·1 whereas ours is 10·6 and, Karachi 10·7.

A-2559. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What do you mean by general administration ?—Those officers who are employed for the general administration of municipal affairs, like municipal commissioners, officers in the collection department and so forth.

A-2560. You mean the management charges ?—Yes, roughly.

A-2561. *Mr. Clow* : Do your figures relate to productive debt as well as to unproductive debt ?—Yes, both. On public safety, Bombay spends 4·4, we spend 9 and Karachi 2·8. That means that we spend more on lighting, because that goes under the Government of India's classification under public safety, and fire-brigade. In the matter of water-works Bombay spends 2·5 irrespective of debt charges ; we spend 6·1 and Karachi 6·9.

A-2562. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Can you give us these percentages in rupees, annas and pies ?—I can give that information shortly from my file. On drainage we spend 6·1, Karachi 6·9 and Bombay 4. On conservancy we spend 17 per cent. and Bombay 12, because their roads are asphalted. We are very bad, I do admit, in the matter of medical relief.

A-2563. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What are the comparative figures for Bombay and Ahmedabad in the matter of medical relief ?—Under public health we spend 3·2 and Bombay 2·2. On hospitals and dispensaries Bombay spends 4·4 out of the total municipal expenditure, while we spend 1·8 and Karachi 6·0 ; Karachi is well-equipped. Of course, in Bombay they have got many other institutions outside the municipal sphere.

A-2564. *Colonel Russell* : Do you maintain a civil hospital here ?—We offered to undertake the responsibility of managing the civil hospital here but Government imposed certain conditions which the municipality did not accept.

A-2565. It is a Government hospital ?—Yes.

A-2566. *Mr. Ahmed* : You spend very little money on medical relief ?—Yes ; I do admit that medical relief requires extension. In the matter of education, we have got 92 schools, of which 14 are for specific classes—two for the children of factory workers, three for depressed classes, one mixed school for depressed classes, two girls schools for depressed classes, four Gujarati night schools and two Urdu schools. We are trying to have compulsory education ; we have made it free although not compulsory. We requested the Government to give us half the expenditure, but they have their own financial difficulties and so they are not in a position to sanction the compulsory scheme. We again approached the Government saying “if you cannot spend money, we are prepared to spend ; allow us to have this compulsory scheme”. Government's reply

is to this effect that under the existing law this cannot be done. So we are thus handicapped. We have requested the Government to amend the law so that if they are not able to finance, we can at least do our duty.

A-2567. How is it that in other municipalities they have introduced compulsory education in certain wards?—That might be, but now of course schemes of other towns are also rejected. It is only about two years back, when the finances of the province were sound, that Government undertook the responsibility of bearing 50 per cent. of the total cost. As long as their revenue does not develop so long the request of all the municipalities cannot be granted. Unless they increase their own taxes and give contribution to the municipalities we cannot make much headway in this direction. At least some of the larger municipalities may spend money from their own funds in expectation that when the provincial finance improves they might get some share. But that is a distant hope for the present.

A-2568. *The Chairman* : May I just ask you to let us know exactly what is the alteration of the law that you wish to suggest?—We have got a separate Primary Education Act at present. Under that Act it has been laid down that when a compulsory scheme is introduced with the sanction of Government, Government is bound to bear 50 per cent. of the approved total expenditure.

A-2569. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : 50 per cent. of the additional cost required in making it compulsory?—Yes. So this extra 50 per cent. of the growing expenditure is a big burden to the provincial Government, because they have no other source of revenue except entertainment tax in big towns and cities; and other kinds of taxation it is very difficult for them to carry through in the Council.

A-2570. *The Chairman* : Is the alteration in the law, which you would wish to see, to enable a municipal authority to put into operation free compulsory and elementary education when they are prepared to do without the 50 per cent. grant from Government?—Yes. Whatever grant they are able to pay, even below 50 per cent., we would welcome; but anyhow we should have freedom, if necessary. I know many municipalities would not come forward, but this is our own offer; we intend bringing this matter to His Excellency's notice when we present him with an address. We have made this offer on the understanding that when the finances of the province improve the provincial Government would bear the burden from the date on which we incur the additional expenditure. We do not want to commit ourselves to a position whereby Government may deprive us of our legitimate share while other bodies will be getting it.

There is one lady supervisor over 10 midwives recently appointed. The municipality have also acquired a very large strip of land outside the Ellisbridge and a big general hospital is to be built out of the donation given by Seth Wadilall, as I already mentioned. The total cost of the hospital including the equipment would be about 7 lakhs. These are the actions which we have taken and propose to take.

A-2571. Have you not within the last two years adopted an improved standard of by-laws for housing?—Yes. Our by-laws were last amended in 1925. In those by-laws we have now determined the zones, following the American model; that is to say, certain areas should be set apart for specific purposes. We have zoned out our municipal area into three zones, of which one is for the purpose of constructing *chawls* by the new mills; these zones are divided into plots and are shown in green colour in the map drawn by Mr. Mirams in connection with his city improvement scheme. They are intended for the construction of buildings, for the mill operatives and poor classes. Either the owners themselves may construct the buildings or the mill managers may do so if they choose. The local authorities also may acquire the lands and put up buildings. The millowners are at liberty to construct *chawls* within easy reach of their mills in order that their men may not be put to the inconvenience of walking long distances to and from the mills. We have allowed them to put up their own *chawls* within 30 or 40 yards of the perimeter if any additional land is available.

A-2572. In what respects are your new regulations an improvement upon the old ones?—At present back to back *chawls* are being disallowed. That is a great improvement.

A-2573. Any improvements in size?—The minimum area of a plot for the construction of a *chawl* should be half an acre.

A-2574. What about the size of rooms?—A dwelling room should have a floor-space of at least 144 sq. ft.

A-2575. Do you mean 12 by 12?—Yes. There should be a verandah and an open space all round 15 feet wide. Between two rows of *chawls* there should be at least 12 or 15 feet at any rate not less than 12 feet.

A-2576. Is there any regulation with regard to height?—The height must be 7 or 7½ feet for the small *chawls*; for other buildings it must be 9 feet.

But in the same way as Government refuse to pay you their 50 per cent., you refuse to carry out your obligations towards the people of Ahmedabad and want the millowners to take them over upon their shoulders. Is that not so?—I doubt whether that is a correct statement of the position.

A-2591. Now take medical relief and maternity benefits?—But what is the contribution that the mills themselves as a whole make to the Municipality?

A-2592. They are rate-payers, the same as other citizens and you are entitled to take rates from them for the discharge of your obligations?—Yes.

A-2593. Because you are unable to discharge your duties and you will not increase your taxes on the people, why do you want somebody else to shoulder your responsibilities?—As a matter of fact that is not one of our obligatory duties. That is purely optional.

A-2594. Public health is an obligatory duty on all municipalities?—I referred to the construction of *chawls*.

A-2595. No, at present I am not referring to that. I am only speaking of those obligatory duties which every Municipal Act lays down. Do you think that it is the right policy for the municipality not to discharge its statutory duties by raising the necessary taxes but to transfer its responsibility in part to certain sections of the public?—In what way are we transferring our responsibility?

A-2596. You want the millowners to provide primary schools?—I never wanted them to do that.

A-2597. I know you never wanted them, but you have not provided enough schools?—We have provided 92 schools.

A-2598. If the municipality had provided enough schools to meet the demands of the whole population there would have been no question of any section of the community being asked to provide schools?—The Municipality can provide as many schools as are necessary from their own funds irrespective of Government grant if the scheme is made compulsory. Otherwise many children will not come forward.

A-2599. Under the Municipal Act one of the duties imposed on the Municipality is to make adequate provision for primary education of children.—That is admitted.

A-2600. If that duty was discharged, no responsibility would fall on a section of the population such as the millowners?—How many children are there which do not get seats in primary schools? If in any particular locality there are 20 or 30 children willing to attend school we are ready to open a school for them. In what way has the Municipality not discharged its duties?

A-2601. If they had discharged their duty the question of millowners providing schools would not have arisen?—I would not say that the millowners should provide schools. If the millowners themselves say that in a particular mill there are 30 or 40 children of school-going age and that they are willing to go to school, we would open a school at once. I would advocate that policy so far as I am concerned.

A-2602. You would advocate that policy, but the Municipality has not done so yet. Let us take medical relief and maternity benefits. You desire that a section of the population, i.e., the employers, should provide medical relief, whereas it is the obligatory duty of the Municipality to provide medical relief for its citizens?—I have already said that it is the statutory duty of the Municipality to provide medical relief and that it should do much more in that direction. I do not say that it is the duty of the millowners to open schools or have separate dispensaries. If they do so, it is charity. It is not their duty.

A-2603. Exactly. You suggested that there should be a special Act passed called the Improvement Trust Act. You have referred to Bombay as having one such Act. Do you know that the Municipality has all along taken the view that the constitution of this Improvement Trust is a form of supersession of the Municipality?—That was what I myself contended. I drafted the representation for amalgamation.

A-2604. In spite of that you have advocated that for Ahmedabad?—The reason is this: in Bombay the Trust has done its duty for 30 years and the works have been executed. There is a defect in the law itself, under which the Municipality is made responsible for the deficits of this separate body. That is the reason why the Corporation wants to stop double expenditure.

A-2605. I am not touching upon that aspect of the question. I know all about that. What I am directing the attention of the Commission to is this: the duties that are entrusted to the Corporation are regarded ordinarily as duties pertaining to local self-government. Is that not so?—Yes, they are regarded as such.

A-2606. If they are regarded as such do you know why it was possible to pass that legislation in Bombay on that occasion ?—Because plague was raging in the city at that time.

A-2607. Was it not because of that special condition ?—Yes.

A-2608. Now under normal conditions you want to create a separate body in supersession of the Municipality in order to discharge the duties which are imposed upon the Municipality ?—As an alternative I would welcome an amendment of the Municipal Act in such a way as to facilitate the execution of all necessary schemes.

A-2609. Then you do not want a separate body to be created ?—Not, if the Act is suitably amended. The executive must be given sufficient freedom to carry out the policy of the Board and the Board should not unduly interfere in matters of detail. There should be continuity of policy and tradition so that schemes launched to-day may not be withdrawn to-morrow. A small compact committee of the municipality, for instance, is far more suited than an unwieldy body.

A-2610. We need not go into the details of the working of the scheme. You have been for five years a Deputy Municipal Commissioner in Bombay. There has been a proposal before Government for several years to pass a special Act for each of the municipalities of Ahmedabad, Karachi and Poona ?—Yes.

A-2611. And that would give you the powers that you ask for ?—I have seen the Bill applicable to Karachi but it is not yet before the Council.

A-2612. Was not that Bill under consideration for several years ?—Yes, that was.

A-2613. Why did not your Municipality write to the Government to give you these special powers to enable you to discharge your duties connected with the growing industrial city of Ahmedabad ?—I myself suggested that the Municipal Act should be so amended as to widen its powers, but the majority were not in favour of that. That is the whole position.

A-2614. You have not now got additional powers. Is not that due to the fact that you were not prepared to ask for them ?—That is a matter to be considered by the Board.

A-2615. *The Chairman* : Is it a case of division between people who wish to talk and people who wish to act ?—It may be, because our forward proposals were not accepted.

A-2616. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You stated that the Bombay Municipality was spending less on some of its municipal duties than the Ahmedabad Municipality. What is your annual revenue and how much do you spend ?—We spend Rs. 36 lakhs out of a revenue of Rs. 39 lakhs leaving a surplus of 3 lakhs.

A-2617. You stated that Bombay spent 35 per cent. of its revenues on debt charges. The Bombay Corporation gets a revenue of Rs. 3,40,00,000. It spends 35 per cent. or Rs. 1,25,00,000 on debt charges, leaving a balance of Rs. 2,25,00,000 for expenditure on its municipal duties for a population of 12 lakhs. That comes to Rs. 18 or 19 per head of the population. Whereas in Ahmedabad you spend Rs. 30 lakhs on a population of 3 lakhs. That comes to Rs. 10 per head of the population. How then can you say that the Bombay Corporation is spending less than the Ahmedabad Municipality in discharging its duties to the people ?—I have been misunderstood. My point is this. If a growing municipality undertakes a big capital programme of roads, hospitals and so on, its running expenditure will be less than if it merely goes on incurring revenue expenditure only. We have not undertaken any large capital programme and so our debt charges are only 9 per cent. of our revenue as against 35 per cent. of revenue for Bombay. On the other hand our running expenses take away a greater percentage of our income. But that is not the case in Bombay. I never meant to say that the Bombay Corporation was not discharging their duties. What they have done by incurring capital expenditure we are doing by spending from our annual revenue. I would personally advocate a large capital programme whereby the running expenditure would be reduced.

A-2618. But you are clearly spending less per head of the population ?—Property in Ahmedabad has not so high a value as in Bombay. Our income therefore is much less here and we have to spend accordingly.

A-2619. *Mr. Ahmed* : Why not value the mills at a higher figure and tax them accordingly ?—They are now paying less in taxes after the revision.

A-2620. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You referred to certain building by-laws for the construction of *chawls*. The plot was to be not less than half an acre or 2,400 square yards. After leaving three-fourths of this space open, you said that the *chawl* should be built only on one-fourth of the area. If these *chawls* were to be built by the Municipality or the Millowners for housing their own workers, that would be a different matter. But if they were to be built by private enterprise have you considered what rents

should be charged for each *chawl* in order to give a reasonable return on the capital invested?—The private owner may put up an upper storey on the same floor space thus doubling the accommodation.

A-2621. Would not that mean additional capital cost? My point is to find out whether the Municipality has considered the effect of these regulations on the rents that would be chargeable in order to bring a reasonable return on the capital invested and make the scheme a practical proposition. If the rents are not adequate to give a reasonable return on the capital invested, private enterprise will not be attracted to this field. Have you worked out what the economic rent of these *chawls* would be?—I have not made the calculations and, therefore, I am not in a position to answer that question.

A-2622. What do you think would be an adequate return on the capital invested in constructing buildings according to your new regulations?—4 to 6 per cent.

A-2623. Have you considered whether under your new regulations you will realize your object of providing sanitary housing accommodation for the people of Ahmedabad?—Yes, it will be realized if the old insanitary *chawls* are demolished and new *chawls* allowed to be put up in the very area.

A-2624. Under the Municipal Act you have the power to call upon the owner of an unsafe building to pull it down. In how many cases have you exercised that power?—I do not know the exact position with regard to unsafe buildings.

A-2625. You have the power to call upon the owners of insanitary buildings to make them sanitary?—Yes.

A-2626. In how many cases have you exercised that power?—I think the Chief Executive Officer will be able to give that information.

A-2627. The Legislature has given you these two powers and you could have exercised them at no cost to yourself. It would be very interesting to know in how many cases you have exercised those powers and attempted to improve the sanitary condition of Ahmedabad?—I would supply the Commission with information regarding the number of notices issued and so on.

A-2628. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You are now the Chairman of the Standing Committee?—Yes.

A-2629. Which is the chief executive committee?—There are two other committees. The Standing Committee has nothing to do with sanitation. There is a Sanitary Committee which is also executive. The condition of buildings, issuing of notices, demolition and all those things, are under the control, so far as the regulations are concerned, of the Sanitary Committee.

A-2630. So far as the constitution of the proposed new improvement trust is concerned, do you expect that you will get better service from that trust?—If we could constitute an executive committee of improvements under the Municipal Act, it would be a better method for putting into effect the scheme which I adumbrated here.

A-2631. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Am I to understand that your object in asking for a separate body is to get additional sources of revenue?—That is one of the reasons.

A-2632. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have referred to the improvement trusts in Calcutta, the United Provinces and other places. They are not in any way departments of the municipalities; they are independent of the municipalities?—Yes.

A-2633. You are not contemplating having a separate body?—If we could constitute an improvements committee under the Municipal Act, I would prefer it, but if that is not possible, a separate Act is indispensable.

A-2634. In the meantime what do you propose to do in order to improve the housing and other conditions?—So far as my own individual opinion is concerned, I have advocated the construction of sanitary *chawls* in one area.

A-2635. On page 70 of the report of the Ahmedabad Municipality for the year 1928-29 it is said that the Municipality have committed themselves to certain schemes; amongst those schemes is a scheme for the asphaltting of roads at a cost of 15 lakhs of rupees and another scheme for constructing a relief road at an expenditure of another 15 lakhs. Do you consider this scheme to asphalt the roads is of more importance than the provision of housing for the workers?—Keeping the roads in proper order is one of the obligatory duties of the Municipality which everyone would wish to fulfil, whereas the provision of housing is an optional duty and it is very difficult to persuade the Councillors to undertake it. If it were in my power, I would give priority to housing.

A-2636. You speak of taking money from the General Fund in the meantime to enable you to go on with the asphaltting of the roads?—Yes, we have applied for a loan of 23 lakhs.

A-2637. But until you get that loan, you are going to take the money from the General Fund?—Yes, by way of advance.

A-2638. Instead of doing that for the roads, would you recommend doing it for housing?—Our revenue from the general balance to that extent is already pledged and earmarked, so that we cannot go behind that; we have a balance of about 15 lakhs.

A-2639. That is your opening and closing balance, but in the General Fund you have about 24 lakhs on deposit?—That is other funds. The balance of the General Fund is 15 lakhs. I am not speaking of Special Fund, Sinking Fund and other funds which are separate; the revenue which is now available out of surplus balance is 15 lakhs.

A-2640. That is your free balance?—Yes.

A-2641. Are you prepared to recommend that some of that money should be spent immediately instead of waiting till you get the improvement trust?—That depends upon the vote of the Council; I cannot say.

A-2642. According to the accounts you collect for water rate about 14 lakhs of rupees?—Yes.

A-2643. How much of that do you spend?—We call it water rate, but 5 per cent. is really house and property tax in the true sense. We have no house and property tax: that is the peculiar position of Ahmedabad. The reason is that under the name of water rate we can tax all buildings, whereas under house and property tax we cannot tax Government land.

A-2644. You have a revenue of about 14 lakhs from the water rate and yet you are only spending under that head, including depreciation and other things, 4 lakhs?—That is true, but we have also a capital scheme for extending our waterworks.

A-2645. In recent years part of your capital expenditure has been paid out of revenue?—The extra water revenue is spent on drainage and waterworks. We borrowed 45 lakhs for the extension of waterworks and drainage. There was a great cry here last summer that the Municipality was not performing its duty properly. Until the water supply is improved we cannot launch other schemes on which water revenue would be expended.

A-2646. I notice from your report that if there is no connection you do not charge anything to shops and buildings?—All properties within the municipal area are subject to a 5 per cent. compulsory tax which is called compulsory general water rate, and when any premises are actually connected with the waterworks by private distribution pipe, we charge 5 per cent. more, making it 10 per cent. of which 5 per cent. is compulsory and 5 per cent. optional.

A-2647. If a man cuts off the connection to his premises, he has only to pay 5 per cent.?—Yes.

A-2648. The result therefore is that many proprietors cut off the water supply in order to pay 5 per cent. instead of 10 per cent.?—But such a position is not created here.

A-2649. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: How can they get the water if they are cut off?—From the public standpipes, but that is very inconvenient, and the mills practically cannot afford to cut off the water connection.

A-2650. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In many cases you will not allow people to build workmen's houses unless they provide latrine accommodation?—Yes.

A-2654. *Lady Nilkanth* : The Bombay Municipality provides *chawls* for the mill labour, does it not?—The Bombay Municipality house their own labour, and we have that arrangement in vogue here.

A-2655. You have stated that the Ahmedabad Municipality is not spending enough money in medical relief. If they spend more money will it be necessary to tax the people more?—Increased taxation will be necessary.

A-2656. Do you think the rate-payers would like that?—No, no one would like that.

A-2657. What is the attitude of the representatives of the rate-payers?—Opposition to any increase of taxation.

A-2658. The millowners tell us they are paying one-third of the taxes of the Municipality?—I do not think that is correct. Here we have direct and indirect taxes. According to my information, they are only paying 23 or 24 per cent. to the Municipal Fund. I will give you the exact figures. Our total revenue from water rate by valuation is Rs. 11,55,000, of which they contribute Rs. 1,11,955. The revenue from water charged by metre is Rs. 2,15,800, out of which they contribute about 2 lakhs. With regard to the drainage tax, virtually no mills outside the city walls are connected with the drainage system, so that virtually they are exempt. Virtually their contribution in all taxes amounts to about Rs. 5,75,000 as against a total of 25 lakhs. Rs. 7,91,000 is our total revenue from terminal tax. Only four items appertain to the mills: coal, cotton, tallow, yarn; those are the principal items on which terminal tax is recovered so far as the millowners are concerned. This burden in indirect tax is about Rs. 2,57,000, or at the most 3 lakhs. In fact they are contributing 6 lakhs as against 25 lakhs, which is about a fourth.

A-2659. Is it a fact that the Municipality is in favour of compulsory education for the mill children?—The Municipality desires to give facilities for all children.

A-2660. Is it not a fact that almost all the mill children go to primary schools in the city?—Yes, everywhere where there is any demand we have opened a school. No children remain without education if there is a willingness on the part of the parents.

A-2661. *Mr. Ahmed* : You are familiar with the findings of the Geneva International Conference on Labour?—Yes.

A-2662. You would agree that employers of labour, whether Government or mill-owners owe a certain duty towards that labour, but I understand that your Municipality is unable to carry out many improvements owing to lack of funds; is that correct?—Yes.

A-2663. It is also correct to say that your Municipality has not much independence but is under the influence of the millowners and rich people. Two or three witnesses have said that. The majority of the elected members of the Municipality are elected by the rich proprietors, the millowners having the majority of votes?—The opposite is the case. The people of whom you speak have not many representatives on the Council; they have only the nominated members. The millowners do not desire to fight elections. The franchise is very wide; the franchise is open to anyone with an occupation rental of Re. 1 per month.

A-2664. Labour has no representatives directly returned by them?—There are three.

A-2665. Only the depressed classes?—The depressed classes.

A-2666. That is out of 48?—Yes.

A-2667. So that the labour classes and their representatives have not got a direct voice in or control over your Municipality. Is that a fact?—I will not accept that view.

A-2668. I know something of your Municipality because I have been here four days. You have only 3 representatives of the depressed classes and what you call labour out of 48; that is correct?—Yes, only three are returned by the depressed classes, but that does not mean that those people have no voice.

A-2669. There is practically no provision made by the millowners for primary education among the labouring classes, their women and children?—They contribute to the taxes; what other contribution do you desire?

A-2670. What do you mean by that: the municipal taxes?—Yes, that is the only source.

A-2671. They do not directly maintain any school, whether night or day school, for the women and children of the labourers?—We have 92 schools.

A-2672. There is still something lacking on your part in giving full and entire support to the maintenance of compulsory education within the municipal area; therefore it is absolutely necessary that the millowners should come in with a liberal hand?—If they make a contribution we shall welcome it.

A-2673. With regard to maternity, hospitals and housing accommodation your answer is the same?—My answer is that there should be increased terminal tax.

A-2674. Further, you value the mills for taxation at a much lower rate than they do at Bombay. They make the same profits here but it is a little cheaper place, and that is why they come here?—The taxation is based on the annual letting value; it is not on profits.

A-2675. The valuation is based on the income?—No. Our taxation is based on valuation; about 4 or 6 per cent. of the capital cost would be the ratable value; it is not on the profits a particular mill might make.

A-2676. If you assessed according to the profits and the income, the valuation would be much more?—But that is not permissible under the law.

A-2677. And the prosperity of your municipal area would have been ensured?—I should welcome it; I should be very glad if this Commission could persuade the Government to let us have this additional taxation on profits.

A-2678. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What would you do then if the mills were making losses? you would get no taxes then?—That would be the necessary consequence.

A-2679. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Then why do you say you would welcome such a scheme?—If taxation were possible on profits, the Municipality would be glad to have it, but no local authority charges on profits as far as I know.

A-2680. *Mr. Ahmed*: The insanitary conditions of this town are owing to the mills and the dirt that is falling on the roads every day which has to be swept up; therefore the mills should pay a little higher taxes, should they not? Do you say Yes?—No, I do not say Yes; it is a joint responsibility.

A-2681. *Mr. Cliff*: As I understand it, you are not here officially representing the municipality to-day?—So far as I know, as Chairman of the Standing Committee I can say that I am representative in that respect of the Standing Committee. Your Commission's reference is now before the Board still pending as to what they should do; but I have authority from the President of the Municipality to present the municipal standpoint, though I cannot commit the municipality in any way. You may take me as an individual member or as a man of experience of the municipality; that is all.

A-2682. You were good enough to enumerate at the commencement of your evidence the number of acres that have been obtained for housing schemes. How many houses have the Municipality in fact built?—As I told you, this law came into operation in 1926. Since then we have reserved these sites in the various town planning schemes; when the sanction of Government has been obtained the Municipality will have sites upon which to build.

A-2683. But in point of fact have houses been built anywhere?—No, because we have not secured the sites at present.

A-2684. Have your Municipality any plans of houses which they would propose to build?—Yes, we have plans prepared by Mr. Mirams. Those plans were explained by him about 8 or 9 years ago to the Millowners' Association. On that basis I have prepared a scheme for working out the cost of constructing sanitary *chawls* in the area which may be reserved for the Municipality.

A-2685. Has that scheme been adopted by the Municipality?—No, it is pending before the committee.

A-2686. At the moment is it a fact that no scheme has actually been adopted by the Municipality?—Yes.

A-2687. What kind of houses are contained in that report which you propose to recommend to the Municipality?—I agree with Mr. Mirams that a large number of smaller buildings containing three or four tenements is much more convenient in Gujerat than big *chawls*. The reason is that in Gujerat the people live in groups and castes. If the Municipality puts up a big *chawl* of 100 or 200 tenements, and if an untouchable or member of the depressed class wants a tenement, the Municipality cannot refuse him though a private owner can. The result of such a man coming in would be that the whole *chawl* would be abandoned and the Municipality would be the loser.

A-2688. In the *chawls* which you think suitable will there be more than one room?—As far as I recollect, there will be two rooms, a verandah and other arrangements; there will also be a privy outside the compound.

A-2689. What size will the rooms be ?—Under our by-laws at present the minimum size of a dwelling room is 144 square feet.

A-2690. What rents do you think the Municipality might be recommended to charge for a house of that character ?—That will depend upon the capital cost actually worked out ; I cannot say at present. The return would be about 3 to 4 per cent. The cost has actually been worked out by Mr. Mirams. If Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 is spent on each tenement on the 6 per cent. basis the rent will be about Rs. 2 per month. In Government buildings the earning capacity of the tenant is also taken into consideration ; a Government servant living in a bungalow is not charged more than one-tenth of his salary.

A-2691. Do you propose to let them at less than the economic rent ?—Yes, in order to encourage people to occupy such tenements. The difference would then have to be paid out of the rates.

A-2692. In the report we have before us the view is expressed that the burden of direct taxation on the poor is already sufficiently high. You have said the water rate is 5 per cent. ? In Ahmedabad 95 per cent. of the premises are connected with the water and pay 10 per cent. Another 5 per cent. is charged if there is a drainage connection, which makes 15 per cent. altogether. That is irrespective of sanitary cess, which is Rs. 4 a family, so that virtually it comes to 16 per cent.

A-2693. Does the occupier of a tenement of one or two rooms actually pay taxation to the extent of 10 per cent. ?—No, our taxation is on the landlord and not on the tenant at all ; we recover from the landlord.

A-2694. Then the landlord pays on a house of that character a tax of 10 per cent. ?—Yes, and 15 per cent. if it is connected with the drainage.

A-2695. Are there any other taxes which the people pay to the Municipality ?—Yes, there is the sanitary cess of Rs. 4 per privy per annum, the wheel tax on those who use vehicles, and the indirect terminal tax on which we realize 7 lakhs.

A-2696. Is that the extent of the taxes for municipal purposes ?—Yes, the taxes and rates fall under those categories, but the Municipality has other sources of revenue ; there are fees from slaughter houses and markets and grants from Government.

A-2697. In this Report of the Municipality for the year 1928-29 it is stated that the incidence of direct taxes per head of population is 5·98 rupees, of indirect taxation in addition 2·38 rupees ; so that the overhead taxation, excluding special charges, is Rs. 8 per head of population ?—Yes, Rs. 8 or 9.

Mr. Cliff : For Karachi it is Rs. 15, Poona 14·3.

The Chairman : I do not think we need pursue this much further ; we arrive at the fact that Ahmedabad is a lightly rated city ; that is the point.

A-2698. *Diwan Chaman Lall :* Were any representatives of the workers included in the members nominated by Government ?—Among the 12 nominated members there is no representative of labour.

A-2699. How many representatives of the working classes were elected ?—There is the Secretary of the Labour Union.

A-2700. At the elections what percentage of the electors go to the polls ?—I have not the exact figure, but I am told it is 45 per cent. at the most.

A-2701. Could you tell me the number of mill-hands who go to the polls ?—I could not tell you.

Sir Alexander Murray : At the General Triennial Election in 1927 there were 68,459 voters of whom 39,400 actually voted. I suppose the great majority of those who voted were workers.

A-2702. *Diwan Chaman Lall :* Do you agree with the statement which Sir Alexander Murray has just made that the great majority of those who voted were workers ?

The Chairman : That must, of course, be a matter of opinion.—I was not here during the last elections so I cannot hazard any opinion on the point.

A-2703. What interest do you pay on your debt and what interest does Bombay pay on its debt ?—Our credit in the market is very good in that respect ; we have had loans at 4, 5 and 6 per cent. The last was 5 per cent. in the public market, with a premium.

A-2704. The interest paid by Bombay, according to this statement, comes to about 3½ per cent. ?—That might be sinking fund.

A-2705. Are you satisfied with the work of the Municipality ?—I cannot say anything on that.

A-2706. The writers of the Report apparently are not satisfied ?—I was not here when this Report was drafted ; I joined here only last month.

A-2707. The average daily attendance at the school was 77 last year as against 88·3 previously, a decrease of 11 per cent. What is the cause of that decrease ?—It may be due to anything.

A-2708. I understood you to say that you depended upon the millowners to come and tell you whether it was necessary to open new schools ; have you or the Municipality made any attempt to find out what the needs of the labouring population are in regard to schools ?—We have got an administrative officer under the schools board whose duty it is to enquire through the teachers and in the locality whether there is any need for an additional school. Wherever there are 20 or 30 children forthcoming a new school is opened.

A-2709. What is the attendance when you open a new school ?—In the beginning the teacher usually brings children, and if there is a sustained interest and the millowners do not take those children back into the factory to work, naturally they stick to the schools.

A-2710. I am suggesting you might extend schools without waiting for the compulsory scheme ?—We are prepared to extend on a voluntary basis.

A-2711. Having regard to the figures of infant and adult mortality, it is the duty of the Municipality to take some immediate steps to clean the city and provide better housing ?—That is one way the mortality can be reduced. It is not the only way.

A-2712. The figures of cost of housing were worked out by Mr. Mirams 9 or 10 years ago. They will now have to be revised ?—Yes, according to the present market rates.

A-2713. Do you intend to consult the workers' organization before you put forward your scheme for building tenements and *chawls* ?—I have a personal friend in Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda and he has prepared a very good statement in regard to the conditions of the labourers. Unfortunately the Labour Union is not co-operating. We should be very glad to have their co-operation.

A-2714. *Colonel Russell* : What actual control is effected by the Municipality over the construction of these new *chawls* that you are putting up ?—The Municipality have a Building Establishment Superintendent with 6 or 7 inspectors under him ; the Municipality grants permission to build and has authority to inspect these buildings. If building is carried out without giving notice or obtaining permission a prosecution is launched with the sanction of the Chief Officer and it comes before the Court. Our difficulty is that while the case is pending the man finishes the work. It may take 3 or 4 months to obtain a conviction ; the man may then be fined Rs. 5 or 10. The Chief Officer then issues a notice for demolition, but, the building having been completed, sympathy is felt for the man who has finished the building.

A-2715. You have a Medical Officer of Health ?—Yes.

A-2716. He would naturally effect some control over the sanitary arrangements in connection with these *chawls* ?—His opinion is always called for in matters of privies and sanitary conditions of buildings.

A-2717. When his opinion is expressed, does the Municipality always accept it ?—As far as structural alterations are to be made, the Chief Officer, who is the head of the executive, naturally accepts it.

A-2718. When he meets with very bad sanitary conditions in certain areas is his report accepted and acted upon ?—If he makes a concise report and asks for definite orders, of course the Committee would not go against his wishes, but if it is a vague and academic report they may not accept it.

A-2719. Take a concrete case : supposing he makes definite recommendations with regard to the demolition of various structures or a definite improvement of various sanitary conditions, privies and so on, are his reports merely shelved, or are they acted upon ?—His reports usually go to the Chief Officer. Then if he agrees with the Health Officer, he issues notices according to the power vested in him ; otherwise he obtains the orders of the Sanitary Committee.

A-2720. And then there is delay ?—That is the delay of the law which we cannot help.

A-2721. You mentioned that smaller tenements were preferable to large tenements. Apart from all questions of cost, would it not be better in all cases to build small tenements ?—I should prefer small tenements.

A-2722. *Mr. Asavle* : How many houses at present has the Municipality provided for its labourers ?—We have got workers on water works and drainage who are housed.

A-2723. Are they free or does the Municipality charge anything ?—We have got about 1,400 people under us as labour in the true sense of the term, of whom about 900 are *bhungs*. We provide facilities for those who have not got houses. Much of it is local labour and they have got their own houses and tenements ; they would not go to houses assigned to them by the Municipality. It is only the outsiders who need to be housed and that number is very limited. The operatives in the workshops, waterworks and drainage have provision on the spot.

A-2724. Is it free ?—Free. So far as the waterworks and drainage are concerned, the tenements are nearly free.

A-2725. Would the two-roomed *chawls* which you propose to build be convenient for the mill-hands and factory workers ?—Our site is near the mill centres.

A-2726. You have said there are reasons other than insanitary housing for the mortality among children ; what are the other reasons ?—Women go back to their villages to be delivered of their children and then return to the city. The births do not increase the birth rate of the city because they take place in the villages, but the deaths increase the death rate of the city. Opium is another cause of the high infantile death rate. It is common sense that the women who work in rural areas should be more healthy than those in the industrial areas.

A-2727. *Diwan Chaman Lal* : Have you any statistics to prove that the women go to their villages to be delivered of their children ?—I have not but it is common knowledge.

(The witness withdrew.)

MUNSHI MANZAR ALI and SHEIKH ABDUL WAHID, Weavers in Ahmedabad.

A-2728. *The Chairman* : You have come before the Commission to tell us something about your work ?—(Munshi Manzar Ali) : Yes.

A-2729. You are weavers in the textile mills in Ahmedabad ?—Yes.

A-2730. You are speaking on behalf of yourselves and some others who are weavers ?—Yes.

A-2731. And you are not members of the Labour Union ?—No.

A-2732. Have you any union amongst the weavers ?—No.

A-2733. Do I understand that this is the paper which you have given to us which is headed "Written statement of some Muhammadan weavers in Ahmedabad" ?—Yes.

A-2734. We have also a statement in front of us which is signed by Maniar Gulabchand Damodardas, Parmar Agarsang Madhavrang and Brahmabhatta Shamalji Odhavji. You are not concerned with that statement ?—No. Those three people are jobbers in the mills and they are naturally in favour of the employers.

A-2735. You say "Government should establish employment exchanges. It will help the unemployed workers to secure work wherever it can be had." Are there many weavers unemployed in Ahmedabad ?—There are many that are unemployed in the weaving department.

A-2736. In spite of the new mills which are now being started ?—Yes. The new mills are not working properly and so many of us are not able to get employment in them ; and in the old mills many of us are discharged by the heads of departments because we are at their mercy.

A-2737. You make a complaint here about the system of the jobbers on whom you depend for your work. Will you tell us what your complaint is about jobbers ?—In the mills in which we earn about Rs. 15 or 16 for a *hap'a* of 12 days there is not so much bribery but in the mills in which we get higher wages, say Rs. 25 or 26 there is a lot of bribery. At the time of our engagement we have to pay bribes to the head jobbers and the line jobbers. We have also to pay Rs. 4 or 5 to them on every pay day, and in some cases we provide them with liquor.

A-2738. Do you suggest that the work could be done without jobbers altogether?—Without the head jobbers the work can be done, but without line jobbers it cannot be done because all the workers are not very efficient.

A-2739. What you then wish is that the power of the jobbers to exact payments from you should be done away with?—Yes, that is what we want.

A-2740. Do you know of the mills where an employment officer is responsible for the engagement of the workers?—No, we do not know.

A-2741. We have been told that in one mill at any rate, or perhaps in more, there is a recruiting officer?—We are not aware of it.

A-2742. You tell us that in the mills where fans have been provided to make the atmosphere cooler, lower wages are being paid. Do you mean that wages have been reduced or that a reduction of wages has been made in order to pay for the fans?—The question of wages depends upon the sweet will and pleasure of the owners and it is not that mills do not earn profits; in some cases the owners want to give as little pay as possible to the workers.

A-2743. Then the statement is that where they make the rooms more comfortable by means of fans they pay lower wages to the workers?—Yes.

A-2744. Will you tell us in which mills lower wages are paid because of the fans?—Motilal Hirabai Mill, Silver Cotton Mill, Ahmedabad-Saharanpur Cotton Mill No. II, and others.

A-2745. Are you quite clear when you tell us that wages were reduced in the weaving department after fans were introduced?—In the new mills, along with the introduction of fans rates were also fixed low. As an instance, I can cite the Saharanpur Cotton Mill No. II.

A-2746. You put before us a complaint that dispensaries should be provided in all the mills, and they should be kept open all the day and not only for a short time as is done in some of the mills. Do I understand that in some mills the dispensaries are kept open all the day while in others they are only opened for a short time?—In two or three mills the dispensaries are kept open the whole day while in some they are opened only, for one or two hours either in the evening or in the morning; in most of the mills there are no dispensaries.

A-2747. With regard to schools you say that there is a want of two or three more schools in the mill area. We were told this morning that the Municipality would open schools wherever there were 30 or more children wanting education. Are you aware of that?—We are aware of the resolution of the Municipality to that effect, but our complaint is that if one school is existent and we put in a petition for another school being opened that petition is not attended to by the Municipality. In most of these schools we have classes up to the third standard only, and in very few up to the fourth standard. English is not taught in these schools and if we want our children to read English we have to send them to the schools in the city where owing to the heavy traffic our young children run the risk of being trampled under cars.

A-2748. You make a reference to a deduction from your wages of one anna per day. What is that for?—In some mills there is a practice of deducting one anna per head per day in the weaving department for damage to cloth irrespective of the fact whether there is damage to the cloth or not; if there is more damage then more deductions are made, and if there is too much damage the cloth is handed over to the weavers who take them to the bazaar for sale. If, say, Rs. 2 is deducted from their wages for this purpose they are able to sell the cloth for Rs. 1-8-0 or 1-4-0.

A-2749. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is that because the cloth is so much damaged?—The damage may be slight or more but the outside people always offer a less price.

A-2750. *The Chairman*: Do we clearly understand that one anna per day is deducted from every weaver in the mill?—Yes, that is true.

A-2751. In all the mills?—Yes.

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A-2752. You say it is deducted from every weaver whether he damages the cloth or not?—Yes.

A-2753. We were told last week that there was a reduction—I think it was one anna per day—made partly towards the cost of the welfare work. Are you quite sure that this one anna which you tell us is deducted is not devoted to some other purpose?—It is not devoted for welfare work. Half the money goes to the mill and the other half is paid to the folders who detect the mistakes..

A-2754. You tell us that if your services are not required you are discharged without notice whereas you are required to give six days' notice if you wish to leave the employment. Is that correct?—Yes, that is so.

A-2755. *Mr. Clow* : Why are you not members of the Labour Union ?—At first we were members of the Union but afterwards we left it because we did not like its activities. At present it is only a nominal Labour Union and is greatly under the influence of the millowners.

A-2756. Why did you not make a union of your own ?—If Government were to help us we will have our union.

A-2757. Why do you not help yourself ?—We have no power. How can we do it ourselves ?

A-2758. *Mr. Joshi* : You say that weavers are not generally promoted to the higher grades of weaving masters. Do you really mean that the weavers should be promoted as weaving masters immediately or they should be first promoted to jobbers' places and then if they are found fit to be promoted as weaving masters ?—We say that we should be promoted only gradually ; we certainly do not advocate that we should be made weaving masters immediately. In this connection I might be permitted to say that in the police department the policemen are given facilities for learning reading and writing an hour a day. We would suggest that we should also be given similar facilities within the mills because it will be an initiative to those of us who are illiterate and uneducated to try to learn reading and writing.

A-2759. As regards the houses for which you pay Rs. 5 rent, are the rooms satisfactory to you or not ?—We do not like those tenements but as other tenements are not available we have no option in the matter.

A-2760. You say " Dispensaries should be provided in all the mills, and they should be kept open all the day and not only for a short time as is done in some of the mills." Is it that in all the mills the dispensaries are not kept open all the day or only in some mills ?—In some mills there are no dispensaries at all and so the question of not keeping them open for the whole day does not arise.

A-2761. What do you do when you remain at home on account of sickness ?—I am living rather far from the municipal dispensary, and when I fall ill I have to go to the municipal dispensary with difficulty, if I want medicine.

A-2762. Can you not go to the mill dispensary ?—Only those workers who live near the mills which have dispensaries can make use of them, others cannot.

A-2763. You say that you do not get any remuneration during the time you are sick. I want to know whether you would be prepared to contribute some share if the employers and the Government also contribute a similar share ?—Certainly ; why not ?

A-2764. You say " We have been working ten hours a day." It is said that if the working hours are reduced the production may be reduced. As weavers, what is your experience ? Will the production be reduced if the hours are reduced ?—Our experience is that after the reduction in hours from 12 to 10 the same amount of cloth is being produced ; similarly, if hours are reduced from 10 to 9, it will not affect the production. But if the mill agents interfere with the yarn then perhaps there may be less production.

A-2765. *Miss Power* : One of the memoranda refers to the fact that beam and cloth carriers are paid from the wages of the weavers. What does that amount to in deductions from the weavers' wages in a month ?—We have already stated in our statement that we are illiterate people ; we do not know how much is taken from our wages, how much is paid to the beam carriers, how much is paid to the folders or how much is taken by the millowners. We have no knowledge.

A-2766. We have had a certain amount of evidence given to us that the workers would prefer a break twice in the day of half an hour each rather than one break in the middle of the day of one hour. Which of the two would you prefer ?—We like only one interval of one hour and not two intervals of half an hour each.

A-2767. You like the existing arrangement ?—Yes.

A-2768. In your statement you refer to bribes taken by jobbers and head jobbers. I want to know whether this bribe is taken at intervals or in one lump sum at the time of first obtaining employment ?—Every pay day we have to pay something.

A-2769. What do you have to pay ?—In the case of weavers, they have not got to pay anything on pay day ; weavers have to pay only Rs. 5 at the time of first employment ; but in the case of line jobbers, the head jobbers have got an arrangement with line jobbers that the latter should pay them half their pay, which amounts to Rs. 50, every year for five or six years.

A-2770. Did you say half his pay ?—The line jobber's pay is about Rs. 100 ; and he has to pay Rs. 50 to the head jobber every year.

A-2771. *The Chairman*: Do you know of any mill where this practice does not exist?—Yes. Calico, Marsden, Rama Krishna and the Patel Mills.

A-2772. Those are the only four mills where this system of bribery does not exist?—I know of only these four: there may be others where bribery does not exist; but I know of only these four.

A-2773. We are told that all the employers wish to get rid of this bribery: they are aware of the existence of this evil?—It is true that mill agents do not like this practice; but the mill agents do not themselves know that such a practice exists.

A-2774. If the mill agents are against this bribery and the weavers are against this bribery and there are four mills in which this bribery has been abolished, why do you not help the employers to abolish it in the remaining mills?—If we complain to the mill agents, the mill agents do not listen to these complaints. Some other workers also complain to the head jobber that so and so has gone and reported, and that head jobber sees to it that the man concerned goes out of the mill gate.

A-2775. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Supposing you formed a union, would your union be in a better position to report these cases of bribery?—It is true that we will get more help if we have a union.

A-2776. Are you quite sure that the beam carriers are paid by the weavers? You said you do not know how much. Are you absolutely certain that the beam carriers are not paid by the mills?—I do not know how much is deducted on that account from our wages; but I am quite sure that it is by deductions from our wages that the beam carriers are paid.

A-2777. How do you know you have to pay the beam carriers, if you do not know how much you pay?—The mill agents have asked the clerks to deduct 0-1-6 per loom per week. There is an understanding between the clerks and the mill agents that if the rates are fixed at 0-1-6 for a particular loom then the mill agent asks the clerks to inform the workmen that the rate is only 0-1-5 or 0-1-4.

A-2778. *Mr. Joshi*: Is not the rate put up on the notice board?—In some mills it is; in others it is not.

A-2779. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does this take place in the mills where the rates are not put up on the board?—It only takes place in those mills.

A-2780. Would the weavers like the mills to institute night schools?—We are in favour of night schools, if these are opened by the mill agents; not in the mill premises but somewhere near the mills.

A-2781. Would the workmen attend these schools?—Yes, certainly.

A-2782. Do you know that in one of the mills in Bombay where there are 20,000 work-people, only 50 attend the night school?—I do not know.

A-2783. You say that in the new mills where ventilation is provided weavers' rates are lower than in the old mills without ventilation?—It is not very much below the rate in the old mills where the wages are higher. It is more or less the same.

A-2784. You say that in the new mills where they have fans you have to start on a lower rate than in the old mills without fans. Do you still adhere to that statement?—I stick to the statement that wages are lower in the new mills with fans than in the old mills without fans; but we prefer to go to the new mills. In the old mills the machinery is defective, so the net outturn is less.

A-2785. Although in the new mills the rates are lower, still you can get as much money as you can in the old mills with high rates because you get a bigger production?—We do not get more wages in the new mills. We get the same, although the rate is low.

A-2786. You would like to have higher wages and shorter hours; is that right?—Since 1918 the rates have been reduced gradually and the rates are low at present. We first want the rates to be increased and brought up to their original level, and then a reduction to be made in the working hours. In that case the production will remain the same, but our wages will become high and we will also gain the benefit of the shorter hours.

A-2787. Will the cloth cost more to make?—The cost will increase.

A-2788. Will it compete with other countries who are shipping cheap cloth here?—The Indian cloth will be able to compete with foreign cloth if the Indian mill agents are less avaricious.

A-2789. Do you think that the profits of the agents are so high that they can afford to pay the same wages for shorter hours and still compete with the foreign market?—We do not know their accounts; but we think they make large profits. Take

an example. A pound of cotton will cost about four or five or at the most 8 annas. Add to that all super-head charges, labour charges, etc. From that pound of cotton you can make 10 yards of cloth, and the cost price of that at the most will be Rs. 1-8-0.

A-2790. Supposing it could be proved that these large profits are non-existent, and that shorter hours and higher wages would mean that the mill would have to close down. What would you propose to do then?—The Almighty is always kind and gracious to His people. In the villages or towns where there are no mills the people have not died.

A-2791. But the point is this. Do you mean if the mill industry is killed you would go back to your village?—We shall take to some other work.

A-2792. You do not mind the mill stopping and closing down?—I do not mind.

A-2793. *Mr. Cliff*: I would be interested to know how you prepared the memorandum which you have put in to-day?—I wrote it in Urdu myself, and then I went to a typist in Ritchie Road and got it translated and typed.

A-2794. You wrote it yourself. Did you consult your fellow weavers before writing it?—I consulted my fellow workers before writing it.

A-2795. Did you get any help in writing it?—No outsider helped me.

A-2796. How do you settle your rates of wages with the employers?—We do not know how the rates are fixed. The Agents may be knowing that; the clerks may be knowing that or some head jobbers may be knowing that. If we find that it will suit us to work on those wages we work in those mills; otherwise we go to other mills. We ourselves do not know how the rates are fixed by the Agent.

A-2797. Suppose any difficulty arises in the mill, or if you have a grievance, are you able to represent that grievance to the Agent?—In regard to certain grievances we can make a complaint, but in regard to others we cannot.

A-2798. In regard to what kind of grievances can you make complaints?—If we go to the agent and complain about rates or damage to cloth, then nobody listens to us; but if we go and complain about beating and abusing or about not getting beam carriers, etc., then our complaints are listened to.

A-2799. You say that "It is impossible to describe the hardship involved in working in some mills where no fans have been provided. It is impossible to work continuously there, as the air gets stuffy." Now the employers say that the workmen waste two hours or more a day talking and smoking in the compound. I want to know whether you agree with the employers that you waste two hours or more per day?—We go to the compound for taking our meals or for smoking or drinking water; but still within the hours that we work in the mills we give 12 hours' production instead of 10 hours' production.

A-2800. You give the same production as you give in 12 hours. Do you leave the weaving room and go out into the compound as much in a well ventilated mill as in mills which are not ventilated?—In mills which have got fans we go out to the compound to smoke for some time and return soon; but in mills which have got no fans we have to go out for a longer time. Inside the mills where there are no fans the atmosphere is so very hot that people often faint and have to be carried to the hospital to be restored to consciousness. The conditions are unspeakable during the summer months.

A-2801. During the summer months?—In summer it happens like that, but in winter also we perspire very freely.

A-2802. That means that you do more work in well ventilated mills?—In both kinds of mills our production is the same, because we have to fill our bellies and we try as hard as possible to give the same production in both kinds of mills even though we may die within the mill premises.

A-2803. Do you get any advances from the employers before the pay day?—In some mills they do give advances on pay, but we have to pay interest on those advances.

A-2804. How much advance can a man get?—The maximum advance that we can get is Rs. 5 or Rs. 6; not more than that. But even for this amount interest is deducted. Some mills deduct interest at the rate of Re. 0-1-0 per rupee, others at 6 pies per rupee.

A-2805. *The Chairman*: Although the money has been earned by the men?—Yes.

A-2806. *Mr. Cliff*: Is that from the mill, or is that from the jobber?—In the mills they get advances only from the manager, and not from the jobber; but sometimes the jobber also arranges to get them advances from outside, from money-lenders. On

this also they have to pay the same interest, namely, Re. 0-1-0 per rupee or Re. 0-0-6 per rupee, per month.

A-2807. Why do the people ask for these advances?—We have ourselves and our children to support. Whenever we run short of money for our food we have to ask for an advance.

A-2808. Cannot you get credit at the grain shop?—Sometimes we buy on credit and sometimes we pay cash also.

A-2809. Would you like your wages to be paid to you monthly?—No, that will not suit us.

A-2810. Instead of getting advances, would you like to be paid weekly?—There was a time when our pay was paid to us every week, but that has been put a stop to. At that time our condition was better than it is now. Even now if they change to a weekly payment system, it will be good for us.

A-2811. You do ask that you should receive some pay during sickness as you say you have to spend on medical aid. I suppose you have got to save money in order to spend it on the doctor? Do you save money for sickness?—Some people are able to save, others are not able to save. Sometimes we only take one meal instead of two meals, and thus economize in order to pay the doctor.

A-2812. There is a statement in this memorandum to the effect that if you come late to the mill even by five minutes you lose your employment for the day—you cannot work that day. How is a substitute engaged when you are late?—If we go to the mills late even by five minutes those people who have gone to the mill previously just at the whistle, are taken in as *badlis*, and we lose employment for the whole day. But if we go in time and the machine on which we are working is out of order, or the material which we require to work the machine is not available and a few hours or days' delay takes place, we get nothing.

A-2813. I was at a mill yesterday where the men took *badlis* with them. Do you know of any mills where the men take the *badlis* with them?—I suppose you are referring to the Shapoor Mill. That mill is at a distance from our place, so I do not know anything about it.

A-2814. Do the jobbers find *badlis*?—The jobbers and head jobbers engage the *badlis*; and where we do not get employment in one mill we go to another mill; and that is how we have to wander about.

A-2815. In answer to a question you said that jobbers take bribes, and that they also take drinks from you? Do I understand that the weavers go into the same drink shop as a jobber?—In many cases both jobbers and weavers go to the same drink shop.

A-2816. Does the weaver ever become a jobber?—Yes, he can become a jobber.

A-2817. You say that there is a lot of bribes paid to the jobbers. What would you say a jobber makes by bribes?—It all depends upon circumstances. Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 are taken at the time of the first appointment, and subsequent bribery is in the shape of drinks.

A-2818. Is that the line jobber or the head jobber?—Usually to the line jobbers, but head jobbers are also given drink so that weavers may be promoted to the post of line jobber.

A-2819. In your memorandum you say: "Jobbers generally take a binding from the men when they are employed, that they would be content to serve on the same pay for a certain period of years; and only after they have received some money from the men, that they would give them promotion." I want to deal with the first portion of that statement. Some men told me yesterday in the mills that for a period they receive less than the rate, and obviously some one else gets the difference between 'less than the rate' and the rates. Where does the difference between what a workman accepts and the proper rate go to?—This statement does not refer to weavers. It refers only to the relation between line jobbers and head jobbers. The pay of a line jobber is about Rs. 100, or whatever it may be. Out of that one-half is paid to the head jobber every year for about five or six years.

A-2820. According to your statement, the jobbers must have a lot of money. What do they do with that money?—He opens a bank account, or he eats and drinks and makes merry.

A-2821. We have been told that the men working in the mills drink a great deal. Do you as a matter of fact spend a goodly portion of your wages on drink?—It is not all people who drink. We have our families and children to support, and how can we do that if we spend all our money or even a goodly portion of it on drink. It is only those

people who have some expectation from the jobbers and head jobbers who spend largely on drink. We do not drink because we have to maintain our families.

A-2822. *Mr. Ahmed* : You state that it costs from 4 annas to 8 annas to purchase a seer of cotton, out of which you can make 10 yards of cloth ; and that taking the cost of its make and other expenses it comes to about 1-8-0 at the utmost ?—That is true.

A-2823. At what price do the millowners sell that cloth—how much profit do they make ?—We are not sufficiently educated and intelligent enough to know how much profit can be made out of these things, but with our ordinary intelligence we can say that it all depends upon the kind of yarn and the kind of cotton used. If good cotton and good yarn are used they get a good price for it ; if bad cotton and bad yarn is used they get less price for it.

A-2824. I take it you say that even if the millowners are less avaricious, they can certainly compete with the Japanese cotton cloth sold in the market ?—Yes, that is what I say.

A-2825. I take it that you want a higher wage because the workmen in Japan and other countries get higher wages, and that you are entitled to get a higher wage than you are getting now as a matter of fact. You want an equitable distribution of the whole profit and to give to the millowners some fixed proportion of profit as is the case in other countries ?—We do not know what happens in Japan and other places. We only know the conditions here and we want that we should get enough ourselves as a living wage.

A-2826. Your case is that you are entitled as a matter of right to leave, pension and gratuity ?—Yes.

A-2827. You want night schools and day schools for your children and that provision should be made for maternity benefits ?—Yes, we think we are entitled to these as a matter of right.

A-2828. While you are ill you generally go to your private lodging and the millowners do not know whether you are ill or not, and because you are absent from the mill wards you do not get your wages ?—Yes.

A-2829. Your demand is that you should get wages when you are sick ?—Yes ; we should get some sickness benefit.

A-2830. Can you tell us what is the difference between you and those people of the union who say that they are boycotting the Commission ?—The present union was formed in 1918. Since that time it has gradually come under the influence of the millowners, and it is only nominally a labour union.

A-2831. You think that is not a genuine union ?—No.

A-2832. What is it ? Do you mean it is a political union ?—It has been existing for the last ten years, but as we are not members of that body we do not know whether it is existent for political reasons or for other reasons. As far as we know, they have no rules and regulations, they do not maintain their registers properly and do not give information to the labourers. We have no connection with them.

A-2833. You say that you pay a rent of Rs. 5 for your lodging accommodation. Can you tell us what it would cost for constructing such a *chawl* ?—We cannot say, as we have never constructed a *chawl*.

A-2834. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Will you please tell us whether you are piece-workers ?—Yes.

A-2835. In answer to one of the questions you said that though the rate may be Rs. 1-6-0 for a certain unit, the clerk and the millowners combine and give you only Rs. 1-4-0 or Rs. 1-5-0. What do you mean by that ? When the rates are put up on the board can you not calculate what amount is due to you according to your outturn ?—In some mills the rates are put up on the notice board while in others they are not.

A-2836. In those mills where boards are kept with rates, you are paid in full, is that so ?—It is not for all varieties of cloth that rates are put up ; for some varieties they put up and for some they do not ; so in many cases it is not possible to find out what wages are due.

A-2837. In some mills no boards are kept while in others boards are kept but they do not contain full information about the different qualities of the cloth ; is that the position ?—Yes.

A-2838. Do you know of any mill in Ahmedabad in which a list of rates is kept on the board for all the qualities of cloth that are manufactured in that mill ?—I do not know.

A-2839. In answer to another question you said that the millowners were very avaricious and if that avariciousness was reduced it would be possible to give the workers higher wages and better housing and that other welfare duties could be discharged. When you used the word "avaricious" did you have in mind the amount of commission that the managing agents drew or something over and above that commission; or is it that you made a general remark?—I made only a general statement and had nothing particular in view. When the millowners do not supply us with suitable machinery and other things what can it be due to except for their avariciousness.

A-2840. When they do not supply you with the required materials the production is reduced, is it not?—Yes, that is true.

A-2841. You lose your wages but the millowner loses his profits also. How is he avaricious?—Yes, he will lose his profits.

A-2842. In regard to the hours of working you said you were able to produce the same amount of work in 10 hours as you used to produce in 12 hours; is that so?—Yes.

A-2843. Your remuneration has in no way suffered in consequence of the reduction of hours from 12 to 10? Are you now getting the same rates for piece-work as you were getting when you were working for 12 hours?—The rates are lower at present.

A-2844. That means that though you are producing the same quantity in 10 hours as you were producing in 12 hours you are getting less pay?—That is so.

A-2845. *The Chairman*: How many rupees a month do you receive now?—From Rs. 36 to 40.

A-2846. How much were you receiving before the hours were reduced from 12 to 10?—On an average Rs. 55 or 60.

A-2847. Are you aware that that is totally contrary to the figures that have been supplied by the official investigators?—We do not know that the figures given by the official investigators go to show that our statements are wrong.

A-2848. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In answering one of the questions put by the Chairman you made a mention about *rathaliya*, and said that you were getting about Rs. 18 as wages when you were working for 12 hours. What did you mean by *rathaliya*?—During War time we were making a special kind of cloth and we were being paid according to the weight of the cloth.

A-2849. In answer to Sir Victor Sassoon you said that you did not care whether the mills work or stop working. Is it your position that the mills may stop as a result of the various demands you have made but that you would insist upon all your demands being complied with whether the industry will stand it or not? The question that you have to consider is this: assuming that your demands cannot be complied with without stopping the mills, would you still insist upon all your demands being met and go to the length of saying "it does not matter what happens to the mills; our demands must be complied with in full"?—We do not go to that length. Our demands are so reasonable that we think that by complying with them the millowners will not find themselves in the position of closing down their mills.

A-2850. Then your position is that the labour and capital should work together, make the industry prosperous and share in the prosperity?—That is what we want.

A-2851. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How old are you?—49.

A-2852. How long have you been a weaver?—For nearly 30 years.

A-2853. In how many mills have you worked?—I have worked in several mills.

A-2854. In how many places have you worked?—First in Cawnpore, then in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Lahore again Ahmedabad, Bombay and again Ahmedabad.

A-2855. How long have you been in Ahmedabad?—The last arrival was some three months ago when I came from Bombay, but I have experience of Ahmedabad since the last 25 years.

A-2856. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In what mill were you working in Bombay?—In Sakli Talav.

A-2857. What is the name of the mill?—I do not know; I stayed there only for 4 or 5 months.

A-2858. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why did you come back from Bombay?—Because of the strikes and riots there.

A-2859. What is the longest period you have served in one mill?—Five years in the Saharanpur mill in Ahmedabad.

A-2860. Why did they not make you a jobber?—I can get a jobber's post only if I offer some bribe or give a drink or shampoo the feet of the superiors.

A-2861. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Why did you not do that?—I am not a man of that type ; I will not stoop to such things.

A-2862. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In how many mills have you worked in Ahmedabad?—In about 10 mills.

A-2863. Why do you change from mill to mill?—In Ahmedabad the practice is to find fault with a good man ; if there is any trouble between a superior and a weaver and if a third man says something in the middle he is at once discharged.

A-2864. Have you been discharged from the different mills because you were making trouble between your superior and some other weavers?—During the course of the weaving supposing there is damage the owner or the manager gives back the damaged cloth to the weaver and imposes a fine. If he protests against this and makes a complaint he gets a beating. I cannot stand such a treatment and that is the reason why I had to change certain mills.

A-2865. When you go to a new mill do you always have to pay the jobbers something to get you a job?—I do not give anything.

A-2866. How is it that you were able to secure jobs in more than ten mills without paying anything to the jobbers when all the other weavers have to pay something?—I do not go to such mills where there is the practice of taking bribes.

A-2867. Then there are a number of mills—ten mills at least here and elsewhere—that do not take bribes?—In those ten mills there was no corruption previously, but at present there are only two or three mills in which there is no corruption ; in the other mills corruption has crept in.

A-2868. Are you a permanent weaver or a *badli* weaver?—If I get permanent work I accept it, otherwise I work as a *badli*. For the last eight days I have no work.

A-2869. When do you get up in the morning to go to the mill?—At 5 or 5-30.

A-2870. When do you take your first meal?—At 6 o'clock.

A-2871. When do you get your next meal?—At 12 noon. Once or twice I take some tea at about 4 in the evening and again at about 6 after I leave the mill.

A-2872. Where do you go after 6 o'clock?—I go home.

A-2873. What do you do when you get home?—As I am a Muhammadan I say prayers ; I will also be talking to friends.

A-2874. When do you go to sleep?—At about 9-30 or 10.

A-2875. When do you take your last meal?—At about 9 after saying prayers.

A-2876. How many meals do you take in a day?—Three meals including the breakfast.

A-2877. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Are you in debt?—Yes.

A-2878. Are you aware that many of the weavers also are in debt?—Yes.

A-2879. How many looms do you work?—Two looms.

A-2880. If you are asked to work more than two looms are you prepared to do so?—Yes, provided the yarn supplied is good.

A-2881. Are you prepared to work more than two looms if you are given the same wages that you are getting now?—No.

A-2882. Suppose you were asked to work on four looms and you were given 75 per cent. more than you are getting at present, would you be prepared to work four looms?—It is not possible for one man to work four looms.

A-2883. Suppose you are given new machinery, better yarn, better conditions of work and better pay, would you be prepared to work more looms?—A man who could live for 15 years would die within 10 years if he were to work on four looms.

A-2884. You are not prepared to work on four looms even if the hours of work are reduced to eight and better machinery is provided?—No.

A-2885. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Suppose you get the assistance of a boy?—If a boy is given to help me, I am willing to work on four looms.

A-2886. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Is it not a fact that many of the faults which result in the cloth being damaged are not due to the weavers but are due to the defective machinery or due to defective mixing or other causes which are beyond the control of the weavers?—That is so.

A-2887. You have told us a good deal about your grievances. Suppose you choose your own representatives and the millowners choose their own representatives and a joint machinery is set up in order that your day to day grievances can be discussed and settled, would you not prefer that?—If there is an understanding between the millowners and our union representatives for settling the day to day disputes, then it will be very good. But at present the question does not arise because we have no union.

A-2888. With regard to workmen's compensation, do you get your compensation without difficulty now-a-days?—The law is in force for the last two or three years, and as far as I understand some people get it without difficulty and some had difficulties.

A-2889. Are you satisfied with the amount of compensation that is now paid, or would you like the amount to be increased?—I have had no accidents myself. I do not know what is the present method of calculating the compensation, and so I regret I cannot answer.

A-2890. With regard to the question about the avariciousness of the millowners, would you prefer a system like this that you should be made sharers in the profits that are earned by the companies?—That will be good.

A-2891. You have mentioned numerous grievances about mixing, bad conditions in the workshops, etc. Would you prefer to have some sort of voice in the management of the mills?—If I get a share in the management, so far as my ability goes, I will try to improve matters and help the management.

A-2892. You can be dismissed and discharged at a moment's notice while you have to give six days notice if you want to leave your employment. Would you like to have a law whereby the millowners will be required to give you six days' notice?—Yes; that will be good.

A-2893. If new machines are given to you and if the hours of work are reduced to 8, do you not think that you will be able to produce as much as you produce under the present system of 10 hours' work?—If the machines are good, if yarn is good, if cotton is good and if the conditions of work are improved, then we can give the same production.

A-2894. Would you like some pension to be paid for the widows of the weavers who die and to orphans of workers?—That will be very good.

(The witnesses withdrew, and the Commission adjourned to Bombay.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

BOMBAY

Thursday, 21st November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I.,
C.I.E.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,
I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. HOUSEINBOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } (*Assistant Commissioners*).
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } (*Lady Assessors*).
Mrs. K. WAGH.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } (*Joint Secretaries*).
Mr. A. DIBDIN.

Mr. R. B. EWBANK, C.I.E., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government
of Bombay, General Department, and Mr. J. F. GENNINGS,
Director of the Labour Office, Bombay.

A-2895. *The Chairman* : May I first of all thank both of you for this very excellent memorandum that you have sent to us in reply to our questionnaire. It is in itself so complete that it will be a matter for us to study over and over again rather than to ask questions about. I shall confine my questions to one or two points which I do not see discussed in the many pages of your memorandum. I do not know whether it will be possible for you, but it occurs to me that it might be valuable for my colleagues and myself if we could have an informal consultation with you at the end of our visit to Bombay, when no doubt we will have questions to put to you that may have arisen from things that we have seen or heard during our visit?—(Mr. Ewbank) We will come with great pleasure; and if it is possible before that Conference for us to know the particular questions on which the views of Government are required, I will take the orders of Government on them, and will then be in a position to give definite answers to any questions that you might ask us.

A-2896. You tell us in this memorandum that there have been many investigations carried out by your Labour Office. I want to ask you, has any attempt been made to form an estimate of the incidence of sickness amongst the workers in Bombay on which any possible sickness insurance scheme could be based?—(Mr. Gennings) No.

A-2897. You have not any information that you could give us for our guidance in the matter?—No, none at all.

A-2898. Is it the case here, as elsewhere, that sickness and leave merge themselves into and are at present indistinguishable from each other. I mean to say an industrial worker goes off on what is called leave to his home in the village. It may be sickness or it may be something else?—That is so.

A-2899. Do you think it would be practicable to require employers of labour to keep a better registration of all the workers that they employ, and as far as possible the facts about their sickness. It is clear from your statement to us that if after our investigation we find that a system of sickness insurance is reasonable and practicable, then we shall

have the support of the Government of Bombay. What we want from you is some information as to the collection of facts on which a system could be based?—It would be possible, but if you are going to use such statistics as the basis for a health insurance scheme, those statistics would have to be gathered over a very long period, and it would mean roughly this: in every case of absence the employer would have to send a medical man to see the employee who is absent and to ascertain whether or not he is sick, and the nature of the sickness. An employee may say after he has been away for three days that he has had fever: that is the common excuse given by all classes of labour in Bombay. He may not have been sick; he may have been taking a rest; he may have been taking a holiday; he may not have had fever; he may have had something quite different. If you want the statistics to be the basis of a health insurance scheme which an actuary could take in hand and formulate the various proportions of the cost that would have to be borne by employers of labour and the State, the statistics would have to be something very accurate. Merely the keeping of a register and the entering into that register what a man says he is absent for, would not I think be regarded by any actuary or any person preparing the financial aspect of the scheme as sufficient. The difficulty here is the relatively small extent to which workers go to doctors. The sickness insurance scheme in England was based entirely upon the records of the various Friendly Societies which had been doing sickness insurance for very many years.

A-2900. That of course is true. What I am trying to get at is whether any beginning, or the foundations of such a scheme, is possible in a place like Bombay?—Yes, it is possible by the expenditure of a good deal of money and very careful organization. All the insurance schemes in Great Britain were based upon the experience of voluntary organizations.

A-2901. *Mr. Cliff*: That is not true, Mr. Gennings, of the Widows and Orphans Pensions Act?—That would be based upon mortality statistics, I suppose.

A-2902. It has led at the present moment to a surplus of about 30 millions?—I do not know. I am merely instancing one country where I know the statistics were available to the State when they were considering their scheme. My view is that before you could take up a scheme of that sort, which I take it would have the backing of the State, you would have to make quite sure that the figures were reasonably accurate and sufficiently detailed to base a scheme on them.

A-2903. *The Chairman*: Do you suggest anything in the way of registration by employers of the labour they employ, which would in future be useful as the basis of a sickness insurance scheme. Do you think, for instance, that the individual worker should be the holder of a card or certificate showing how long he has worked in a place, and then, when he has resumed, whether it is at the same place or at some other place, so as to establish in course of time a record of a worker's regularity?—I do not think there is any objection in principle to a matter of that kind, but of course it would have to be worked out in consultation with the workers to see if they have any objection to any such scheme of registration, and then again whether from the point of view of sickness that would be sufficient, as it would only record absences.

A-2904. It would record absences, and in some cases it would record absence due to sickness?—If the absence is certified, by somebody responsible, as being due to sickness.

A-2905. We are told that there comes, in some cases, an objection from the workers themselves to anything in the nature of a certificate, which is made sure by a finger print. Is that your view that there would be objection on the part of the workmen?—I should not like to say. I believe they have objected in some of the mills to being furnished with cards and having to produce those cards. But I should think they could be won over to agree to such a scheme.

A-2906. If their leaders persuaded them that it was to their eventual advantage?—Yes, they have to be assured that they are going to get something out of it eventually, or that there is a good reason underlying the proposal.

A-2907. My second question arises out of what you tell us here about the system of jobbers. What we are often told is that the jobbers in some cases exact unreasonable sums—to put it mildly—from those for whom they find employment. Has there not been any improvement in Bombay in that respect in recent years? We know that some of the employers have made efforts to get rid of the evils of that system, but I think you tell us that there is not much sign of improvement?—As I understand it there is not very much sign of improvement.

A-2908. Do you know of any cases in Bombay where there is a welfare officer or a labour officer, or whatever term may be used, to deal with the recruitment of labour?—I do not know of any.

A-2909. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : You have got on the Statute Book, Mr. Ewbank, what is called the Free and Compulsory Primary Education Act ?—(Mr. Ewbank) Yes.

A-2910. In accordance with the terms of that Act the Bombay Government have undertaken the liability of granting 50 per cent. of the additional cost to any local municipality that proposes to introduce free and compulsory primary education within its jurisdiction ?—Yes, and two-thirds in the case of the local boards.

A-2911. Is there any provision in that Act which gives the Government the discretion of withholding that grant directly or indirectly from any municipality willing to introduce free and compulsory primary education ?—No.

A-2912. Is it a fact that more than one municipality has submitted schemes in accordance with the provisions of that Act and asked for the sanction of Government for the introduction of free and compulsory education under the Act, and the Government have been sitting over them for years ?—I have the statistics here. Out of 18 schemes for the introduction of compulsory education seven have been sanctioned, five within the Municipal areas, and two submitted by local boards.

A-2913. And in regard to the remainder ?—We have got two more pending. In addition we have 61 schemes for expansion on a voluntary basis, of which 39 have been sanctioned. These are the figures since the Act was introduced in 1923.

A-2914. My point is this. We were told in Ahmedabad, and we have heard it elsewhere, that the Ahmedabad Municipality has submitted a scheme for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education under that Act, and that the Government are withholding their sanction, or delaying it, on the ground that they have no funds to discharge their obligatory duty ?—The Ahmedabad Municipality have assumed control of primary education under the Primary Education Act. But if they have put up such a scheme, I have not seen it.

A-2915. Is it a fact that in the case of some of these schemes, according to a statement made before us, sanction has been withheld for a period extending over one or two years, if not more, on the ground that the Government finances do not permit of sanction being given to the scheme ?—Certainly.

A-2916. Then under what authority are you acting when the Compulsory Primary Education Act does not give you that discretion ?—Under the Primary Education Act, if Government once approves a scheme of compulsory education then it has no discretion to withhold the grant. The Act does not compel Government to approve a scheme. Therefore if we have not the money we do not approve the scheme.

A-2917. Do you think that was the intention when the Act was passed ?—We are administering the Act as it stands to-day. I was not in the Government at the time the Act was passed, and I am afraid I cannot say what the intention was.

A-2918. In asking for sanction a local body is required to submit certain detailed particulars as regards the number of schools, the number of teachers required, the housing accommodation and so on ?—Certainly.

A-2919. Is it not the obvious interpretation that so long as the details of the scheme are satisfactory the Government must approve and pay the statutory contribution. Surely approval cannot depend on whether there is money available or not ?—I am not prepared to interpret the Act.

A-2920. Do you think that the Act gives Government authority to consider whether they will discharge an obligatory duty imposed by the Act, which they have themselves passed ?—Would you allow me not to answer that question quite directly ? The policy of the Government is at the earliest possible date to introduce universal free compulsory education, in accordance with this Act. Nobody is more keen than Government to press on with it ; but owing to our financial situation, which is not satisfactory at present, we are not able to accept liabilities which we cannot meet.

A-2921. The point I wish to make is this. Under the Primary Education Act the financial liability is divided between a local body and Government. When a local body is prepared to shoulder its financial obligations, Government are according to the terms of the Act bound to contribute their share of the expenditure ?—That is an interpretation that we do not admit.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : You have already said so, and I want it to be put on record that you are not prepared to tell us what the Government's intentions at the time were. My impression is clear that the intention was that if all the details submitted were satisfactory, and if the local body was prepared to shoulder its own share of responsibility, Government were bound to contribute their share.

A-2922. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : What are the terms of the Act ?—The terms of the Act, roughly, are that the local body shall submit a scheme giving details. The details are specified. Then it says that Government may or may not approve these schemes.

A-2923. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : It has been represented to us that most of the difficulties in regard to labour are caused owing to the fact that labour is illiterate ?—I agree.

A-2924. Therefore any delay on the part of Government in contributing their share to local bodies to establish free and compulsory primary education is detrimental both to industry and labour ?—Certainly, and it is most regrettable.

A-2925. *Mr. Cliff* : Can you make it clear to us what you mean by saying that Ahmedabad has not assumed control of primary education ?—It is rather complicated. It is a legal point. The compulsory Education Act of 1923 did two things. It first of all transferred control of education, that is primary education, which was previously administered directly by Government, to the local bodies ; that is, to the municipalities and local boards. Secondly it gave the local bodies powers to make schemes of compulsory education ; that is to say, it was not for Government to introduce the policy, but for the local bodies ; they were given local option by this Act of 1923. But if any local body, like the Ahmedabad District Local Board or the Ahmedabad City Municipality, refused to take over the control which was vested in it by the Act, Government continued to administer, and wait for the local bodies to take over in due course.

A-2926. Is the preferment of a scheme the assumption of control ?—No, it is under a different section. They first of all take over control ; then we transfer the masters and the schools ; then they submit a scheme.

A-2927. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : When did the Trades Disputes Act come into operation ?—April 1st, 1929.

A-2928. When was the Court of Inquiry appointed ?—About the middle of July.

A-2929. During all this period the whole of the textile labour was on strike ?—From April 26th.

A-2930. Will you tell me why the provisions of the Act were not availed of during May and June ?—The first difficulty was that the Act had to be brought into force : it had only been recently passed by the Legislature, and we had to get the Government of India to agree to bring it into force. We had then to make rules under the Act, which took some time.

A-2931. I know it was done expeditiously ; I have no complaint to make about it ?—Then the Government had to wait to see how the situation developed, and to get into touch with the associations of masters and the workmen, and to find out how public opinion was moving, and, since the Act provided two alternative lines, to see what line was more likely to be successful. At first we hoped it might be possible to appoint a Board of Conciliation. When that hope failed we had no alternative but to appoint a Court of Inquiry. A meeting was held, at which representatives of all interests concerned in Bombay, were invited to meet with His Excellency. At that meeting the feeling was practically unanimous in favour of the appointment of a Court of Inquiry, and Government at once took action in accordance with that feeling.

A-2932. What was the interval between the strike and the meeting which His Excellency called ?—About six weeks.

A-2933. Are you quite sure ?—The meeting was on the 18th June. The strike began on the 26th April. The court of Inquiry was appointed by a Notification dated the 3rd July. It finished its proceedings by the end of August, and the Report was published in September.

A-2934. The Report drew the attention of Government to various causes which had brought about the strike. Has the Government of Bombay taken any action on that Report ?—The idea of a Court of Inquiry, as I understand it, is to state the facts for the benefit of the two parties concerned, of the public, and of Government. The Government have considered, and have been considering, since the Report was submitted to them, what action it could take on this Report.

A-2935. That is to say, they have taken three months and still they have not come to any conclusion as to what action should be taken ?—On the one hand, we have a Union which has gone into a state of suspended animation. There is no organization among the mill hands, commanding very wide support, with which the millowners or Government can deal. The main problem before Government is to find out some way of creating an organization among the mill hands with which the millowners and Government can deal. If the Commission could give any assistance to Government by pointing out how

we could give the initiative to the mill hands to organize themselves, it would be a great help to Government.

A-2936. The question for consideration is this. In consequence of this strike the financial position of Bombay City and Presidency has been vitally affected, and there is nothing to prevent a recurrence of such strikes with all the resulting disastrous effects on the financial position of the people of the Presidency outside those engaged in the industry. Do you not think it is essential for Government to take precautionary measures now in order to prevent such events recurring with their attendant riots and loss of life?—It is very desirable, but what sort of precautionary measures have you in your mind?

A-2937. Surely the Government is not in such dire necessity of outside suggestions? They have the Riots Inquiry Committee Report, and they have the Trades Disputes Inquiry Report?—(Mr. Gennings) I think the Reports of those two Inquiries suggested that the trouble which had occurred was due to the action taken by the leaders of a certain Union. It would therefore appear that any action that Government could take would have to be for things that had happened previously in connection with this particular Union; that is to say, action would have to be taken either against individuals or against the body which was known as a trade union. So far as the Riots Inquiry Committee Report is concerned, the people to whom reference was made there are in fact under trial. The people in the Meerut case are the people who are referred to in the Report. So far as the Report of the Court of Inquiry is concerned, their Report was to the effect that the strike had been premature and that it had been carried on not on real trade union principles. Government has found itself in some difficulty in taking action against a trade union which is acting within the terms of the Indian Trade Unions Act and which may or may not in the opinion of Government's legal advisers have done something which brings them under the ordinary Indian Penal Code. I think the examination has shown that so far as they are a trade union covered by and regulated by the Indian Trade Unions Act there is no action that can be taken against them.

A-2938. Is it a fact that at the conference to which Mr. Ewbank has referred, His Excellency announced certain measures which were to be applied to the situation?—(Mr. Ewbank) He announced certain measures the application of which should be considered.

A-2939. He announced certain measures which the Government had decided to apply?—(Mr. Gennings) I was present at the Conference. I think what was said at the Conference, and what was said in the memorandum which was circulated afterwards, was that certain measures were set out, and the Conference was told that if the Court of Inquiry did so-and-so, or if certain facts were found, Government could take such-and-such action.

A-2940. Will you please supply the Commission with a copy of His Excellency's speech because my impression of what occurred is quite different. At that time no Court of Inquiry had been appointed, and it was said that certain measures, which were stated to be absolutely necessary, were to be taken?—You are perfectly correct.

A-2941. If that is so, were any of these measures actually taken?—(Mr. Ewbank) Certain measures have been taken.

A-2942. And certain were not taken?—Yes.

A-2943. *Diran Chaman Iall*: What were those measures?—One measure was passed at the last session of the local Legislative Council, giving Government power to declare, in time of emergency in the Presidency, that intimidation was a cognizable offence.

A-2944. Was that the Public Security Act?—It was the Bombay Prevention of Intimidation Act.

A-2945. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: The best way would be for you to send us a copy of His Excellency's speech. It is a fact that out of the 83 Bombay cotton mills which existed, seven are not working?—(Mr. Gennings) Seventy-seven are working, and six are not working.

A-2946. You say under "Application of International Conventions relative to unemployment,"—"With this view we suggest the formation of what may be called an Out-of-work Donation Fund on a voluntary basis to be created by a system of setting aside a contribution by the millowners of one anna per operative per month, which means virtually a contribution from the shareholders, to which fund the operative should be invited to contribute one anna"?—That is a quotation from the Fawcett Committee's Report.

A-2947. This is a suggestion under the consideration of Government?—Yes—

A-2948. It is also pointed out that the Bombay Millowners' Association consider that the reduction of the hours of labour in 1920 from 12 to 10 has resulted in a fall in production of 16 per cent. in the spinning department and about 11 to 12 per cent. in the weaving department. Then there are various measures advocated. Has the Government of Bombay considered the cumulative effect of all these measures on the existing industry, and on the prospects of the expansion of the textile industry? What I mean is that if all these measures are adopted, which would necessarily raise the cost of production, how will the industry stand them, both in regard to existing industries and the prospects of expansion?—(Mr. Ewbank) As you know, the Government of Bombay have taken no action yet with regard to these recommendations and they are considering the effect upon the industry concerned. But the first point to which you drew attention is a fund which is dependent on a system of rationalization. If rationalization is introduced and if efficiency is increased it is then that the millowners would be asked to make some contribution to an unemployment fund in order to relieve the difficulties of the men who are thrown out of employment owing to the rationalization scheme.

A-2949. You admit them that if the shareholders do not get a reasonable return on the capital invested, fresh capital for expanding the industry would not be available?—About that I could express no opinion.

A-2950. Do you think that any of the legislative measures which have been passed during recent years and the several strikes that we have had in Bombay constitute one of the causes why seven mills are not working?—(Mr. Gennings) I do not think that we have enough information on which to express an opinion.

A-2951. If any measures have the effect of adversely affecting the expansion of industry, the extent of unemployment would increase?—(Mr. Ewbank) Presumably yes.

A-2952. *Mr. Clow*: In connection with the last question, you are doubtless aware that there has been considerable expansion in this industry in other centres than Bombay?—Yes.

A-2953. Particularly in Ahmedabad?—When I said that unemployment would increase, of course I meant in the places where the expansion of the industry is restricted.

A-2954. You say "the labour conditions in Ahmedabad are better than in Baroda because of shorter hours of work and legislation regarding Workmen's Compensation," and further on you say that these have had the effect of attracting labour from other areas. Is that a fair conclusion?—(Mr. Gennings) We have figures somewhere in this report showing the number of millhands employed in Ahmedabad, and it is a question of fact.

A-2955. Is it a fair conclusion that the reduction of hours and the introduction of other beneficial measures like workmen's compensation have had the effect of increasing the supply of labour. For example, labour conditions in Ahmedabad are better than in Baroda because of shorter hours of work and legislation regarding workmen's compensation?—If you turn to the Government memorandum you will see that the actual increase in Ahmedabad between 1921-26 is 5,000.

A-2956. That increase implies that the supply of labour has become easier?—That is the information we have.

A-2957. These figures relate only to the textile industry and not to industries generally?—No.

A-2958. You have given an analysis of workers according to the length of service. On what principle was the selection of workers made? You have given some 1,400 workers?—What we did was to take predominantly working classes localities, and we took a sample of one in ten in order to make the inquiry. It was a small inquiry which we thought would be of some interest.

A-2959. You are satisfied that the returns do relate to service over a large number of mills and that they do relate to total continuous service. You give the number of mills in each case?—Yes, we set it out according to the number of mills in which a man has served, and the period for which he has served in them.

A-2960. The general result seems to be that about half the workers have seven years service or less?—Less than ten years' service.

A-2961. That covers about two-thirds?—Yes. We only took the group between 5 and 10.

A-2962. What would you say was the percentage of persons in the textile industry in Bombay who have no connection whatever with any village outside Bombay City and island?—I should not like to make a definite statement on that point.

A-2963. Is it a big proportion or is it still a very small proportion?—I think it is still a small proportion; that is to say, I think a great majority of workers in Bombay have a vital living connection with their village.

A-2964. *The Chairman*: Is it not 80 per cent.?—That figure which we have given in our memorandum is based on people born in the city. I have been doing work with regard to workmen's compensation for about a year and a half and during that period I have not come across a case yet where the workman or his dependents either were not living in a village or did not go back to the village when they received their money.

A-2965. *Mr. Clow*: You give figures of mortality in your memorandum. They show a striking decrease in Bombay City in the last seven years; the figure for 1927 is practically half that for 1920. What is that due to?

A-2966. *Colonel Russell*: Is it not due to the reduction in plague incidence?—I should not like to say what the causes are for the improvement. I think infantile mortality is less now than it was in the earlier years. Possibly in 1920-21 the effects of the influenza epidemic might still have been felt. That is pure conjecture, which the Director of Public Health would probably be able to clear up, and also the municipality, because their statistics for Bombay city are very much better than for any other place.

A-2967. *Mr. Clow*: With regard to workmen's compensation, you have given us the view of the Bombay Government on a reference made by the Government of India. You say that in the case of death and permanent disablement the minimum should be raised to Rs. 400 and 500, respectively. Do you realize that the minimum depends at present, as the Act stands, on the lowest item in the scale of assumed wages?—It does.

A-2968. And that by adopting the scale that you have suggested you would be giving a considerably smaller minimum; you would be giving Rs. 300 and 420, respectively?—Yes, that is so. There would be two ways of considering the minimum; one would be to lay down that the actual lump sum payment should be a fixed sum, or you could arrive at the same amount by making your assumed wages higher.

A-2969. My point is that if your suggestion regarding Rs. 400 and 500 was accepted, there would be no point in putting Rs. 10 as the lowest basis of assumed wages?—Except, of course, it might be reasonable to take Rs. 10 as the basis of your assumed wages when you are dealing with temporary total or partial disablement.

A-2970. Was that the intention?—No, I think the intention was that the minimum amount that would be payable in respect of death or permanent total disablement should be the higher amount.

A-2971. As regards the question of lump sum payments as against recurring payments, the Local Government appear to be in favour of the maintenance of the existing system mainly on the ground, I gather, of administrative difficulties?—That is one ground, but I think the actual desire of the workers is a very great factor.

A-2972. In your experience, are the lump sums profitably expended, or are they apt to be squandered?—I think in every case quite a good proportion of the lump sum goes towards the payment of debts which have been accumulated by the deceased workman.

A-2973. Suppose you as workmen's compensation commissioner had the power to give either a recurring payment or a lump sum, would you exercise your discretion in many cases in favour of recurring payments or would you not?—Not very often. I can do that, and sometimes do it now, in the case of women and minors, but the trouble is that, unless you have so large a lump sum that the interest on it, or the purchase of an annuity, will furnish a reasonable living wage or a pension, at sometime or another the money comes to an end and then the people have got nothing left whatever. Take a case of Rs. 600 deposit. That would be for a fatal accident to a man earning Rs. 20 a month. The dependants might be a widow and a child. Assuming that Rs. 10 a month would be sufficient for them in the mofussil, that would mean in about five years that sum is exhausted, and these people who have been used to depend on a regular monthly income are left with nothing.

A-2974. I was contemplating a case in which you had power to pay pension until either the child reached maturity or till the widow died?—That would mean a very large increase in the benefits.

A-2975. Not necessarily; it could be actuarially calculated?—That is where the difficulty would arise. The question of ages is very difficult. I have considered the question of buying annuities for women.

A-2976. Suppose the local board has had to declare that in particular areas or industries fixed recurring payments should be the rule as specified by the Act, say for a widow until

she died or for her children up to 15 or some selected age, would you be prepared to recommend applying that to any particular class of workers? Take Ahmedabad where the workers appear to be much more permanent and resident in the neighbourhood than here?—Theoretically it is all right for a child. That is what I often do in fact with a child about 10 to 15; I put the money in the savings bank allowing the father or any other guardian so much a month; then when the child comes of age he gets the lump sum. But with regard to the widow, I think it would be rather difficult. I think we would have to differentiate between castes where re-marriage is customary and castes where it is not. In the case of a widow, say of 20, who happens to belong to a caste where re-marriage is not permitted the possibility is that you might have to pay a pension to her for 30 or 40 years.

A-2977. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You would have to face the danger of substitution in the case of death?—I think that is quite possible, because they would inevitably go back to their villages.

A-2978. *Mr. Clow*: The case of permanent total disability is simpler than that of death?—Of course. There are relatively few cases of permanent total disablement.

A-2979. In Appendix VII to your memorandum you have given an interesting statement showing the wages of workers who received compensation. This would seem to indicate that the average wage of the persons injured lay somewhere between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25?—Yes; That will be the medium; it will be about that.

A-2980. Would you say that is true of people employed in organized industries generally throughout the Presidency?—No. I think it would be a little higher than that because a lot of these figures are mofussil figures, because they deal with railways in the mofussil and apply to gangmen and workers of that type whose wages in the mofussil are not so high as in the city. So that, these wages are not really city wages.

A-2981. It is more a wage figure for the whole Presidency?—Yes.

A-2982. We found in a mill which we visited this morning that a deduction was being made from every operative to pay the doctor. Is that a common practice?—No. It is not a common practice, so far as I can say offhand. We have dealt with that question in the Report on Deductions from Wages.

A-2983. It seems to be rather like compulsory sickness insurance in operation?—My recollection is that it is an unusual practice.

A-2984. Dealing with fines, you say that information was collected only as regards 24 mills, and the others did not give information. Would it be fair to assume that conditions as regards fining are more severe in the mills that did not give information than in those that did?—We have only recorded facts. You may draw any conclusions from them. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the actual facts. There are nine mills in which wage deductions were made for medical attendance. That is page 26 of our Report on Deductions from Wages.

A-2985. Would that deduction be willingly accepted by the work-people?—That I could not say.

A-2986. *Mr. N. M. Joshi*: Did the Court of Inquiry presided over by Mr. Justice Pearson make any confidential report, as was stated in the newspapers?—(Mr. Ewbank) Yes.

A-2987. Was it competent for a Court of Inquiry appointed under the Trade Disputes Act to make a confidential report? Was it in accordance either with the spirit or the letter of that Act?—(Mr. Ewbank) I think so. Section 12 says that the report of the Court of Inquiry shall be published. Here is the report which has been published.

Sir Victor Sassoon: It says "The...report...shall...be published by that authority in such manner as it thinks fit".

A-2988. *Mr. Joshi*: It does not say that there can be a report which need not be published?—(Mr. Ewbank) It does not say so.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Sub-section (2) says "The said authority may publish or cause to be published from time to time, in such manner as such authority thinks fit, any information obtained, or conclusions arrived at, by the Court or Board as the result or in the course of its inquiry or investigation." That is an *ad interim* report made to Government.

A-2989. *Mr. Joshi*: That has nothing to do with the non-publication of the report. Could the Royal Commission have a copy of that confidential report?—I should have to take the orders of Government on that point before replying. I will make a note of it.

A-2990. Arising out of your reply to the Chairman on the question of sickness insurance figures, is it possible for the Labour Office in co-operation with one or two millowners to collect figures, say for six months, about absenteeism on account of sickness? My suggestion is that you should take one or two mills, keep your investigators there, say for six months. It will be the business of the investigators to go into the names of absentees and find out why the men were absent and make a sort of report at the end of those six months?—(Mr. Gennings). That would give you some rough information of course. We should have to have an insurance expert to say whether that would be of any value in preparing a scheme, or whether the data we have got that way would enable us to collect really reliable statistics.

A-2991. We can get some figures of some reliability. Will it be possible for the Labour Office to do that?—Yes; if we were given the staff, it would be possible—within those limitations of course.

A-2992. It would be possible for you to collect the figures if your Government sanctioned the expenditure?—Yes; but the Labour Office would not guarantee the accuracy of the figures except in a very general way, because the investigators could not tell whether a man was really sick. They can draw certain conclusions; they can give their views whether he was or was not sick.

A-2993. With regard to your reply to the Chairman on the question of registration cards, you said that the workers might have an objection. Would you tell me why they should have any objection if the employer maintained a register?—The workman would have to have this card.

A-2994. The cards will remain with the employer. If the workman wants it, he will take it; otherwise, it can remain with the employer?—I did not understand that the Chairman meant that. I understood what the Chairman meant was a permanent record which each man would carry with him from mill to mill, showing over a period of years, the mills that he had been in, the times he had been absent, and the times his absence was due to sickness, and that every mill worker would have to keep the card and take it from mill to mill.

A-2995. I may explain my idea. The registration card will be in the first instance with the employer under whom the man is working. If after some experience the workmen found that it was easy for them to get employment by carrying the card, they would themselves ask the employer to give them the card. Gradually the workers would begin to ask for the registration card if they found it easy to get employment with a card. From that point of view, there should be no difficulty. I want to know why the workers should object to registration cards being maintained. They can take them if they want.—(Mr. Ewbank). What we suggest is that they should not be introduced without consultation with the workers, because we feel doubtful how the workers will regard it. I have seen the system of registration in East Africa among black labour, and I am inclined to think that there might be objection.

A-2996. We are not thinking of compulsory registration by law; we are thinking of voluntary registration. If it is compulsory, then certainly people will object. If the card is useful in securing employment, the workers may have it. Take the case of seamen. They have to produce a certificate before getting employment, and the men value the certificate as it enables them to get employment. If it is made voluntary and not compulsory, there may be no difficulty?—(Mr. Gennings). It is probable that he would not object, but I do not see what you would obtain from that of any value.

A-2997. The value will be that if he can show that he has worked in a particular mill, it will be easy for him to get employment in another mill. He will not be regarded as a new hand?—In fact it would become a sort of certificate as in the case of domestic servants.

A-2998. Yes; it would become a certificate?—I was not looking at it from that point of view. The Chairman suggested that it could be used as a basis for sickness insurance.

The Chairman: Well; I had both things in mind. I had the advantage to the workman of a record of his accumulated skill in obtaining work. I had also in my mind the beginning of a satisfactory system of registration on which future social benefits might be based.

A-2999. *Mr. Joshi:* I want to know from you whether the only objection from the point of view of the workers is to the registration cards mentioning the quality of the work or the character of the workman?—Yes. Of course, a sailor always has that on his discharge certificate.

Mr. Joshi : The sailors are objecting to that, and the International Labour Conference passed a convention stating that the quality of work or the character of the man should not be mentioned in the certificate.

The Chairman : My suggestion was merely to record facts and not opinions.

A-3000. *Mr. Joshi* : That is exactly what I am suggesting. There may be objection if opinions are recorded ; there may not be objection if only facts are mentioned.—Yes.

A-3001. You have given some figures of population born in Bombay ; the percentage is going down and down. Would it be a fair conclusion to draw from that that Bombay is gradually becoming unfit for permanent residence for working classes ?

Sir Victor Sassoon : Do those figures refer to workmens' *chawls* ?

Mr. Joshi : No ; they are general figures for the city of Bombay.—(Mr. Ewbank). You will notice the explanation just below the figures. The means of transport constantly being improved, the tendency is for the labouring classes to send their wives home at the time.

A-3002. Do you think that my conclusion is a fair one ?—No ; certainly not. The conditions in Bombay are clearly improved. They have improved in my life-time enormously.

Mr. Joshi : I do not know whether they are improved or not, but the figures really show that people do not permanently reside.

The Chairman : It shows that child birth—takes place in villages more now than it did in the past.

A-3003. *Mr. Joshi* : There is mention in your memorandum of a practice in Ahmedabad of children being hired by jobbers and *mukadams*. Can this practice be regulated or prohibited by law ?—(Mr. Gennings). If it were considered necessary, I suppose special legislation would have to be passed. Of course such legislation would have to be very carefully drawn up in order not to prevent or interfere with genuine apprenticeship and things of that kind.

A-3004. Have you considered whether such a practice deserves to be either regulated or prohibited by law ?—I have not considered it generally. It seems on the face of it to be a bad practice, but if you examine it very closely you might find that these boys received training in the beginning and eventually got jobs.

A-3005. You also mention a similar practice about *mukadams* getting paid by the contractors for the workers employed by the *mukadams*, and you say that sometimes it gives rise to evil practice. Can that be regulated by law or not ?—Yes, but it would be very difficult. The best way of regulating it is for the employer to take it over and get his labour in a different way.

A-3006. About public employment agencies, you say "This involves a willingness on the part of labour to go anywhere when a job is vacant." This refers to the workers going out of the city. But will not a public employment agency be useful in a city like Bombay where there are 80 or 75 mills and the workers have to go from mill to mill seeking a job ? If there is a public employment agency, it will regulate the employment somewhat better than under the present circumstances, and we need not think of sending the workers outside the city. Will not a public employment agency be useful for workers within the city itself ?—If you are only going to use it for that purpose, then I think such an employment agency could best be set up by the industry itself.

A-3007. You think that it should be set up by the industry itself ?—Yes, by the industry itself.

A-3008. Why do you object to Government doing it ?—If there is to be a Government agency of that kind, it should be able to cover the whole Presidency or the whole of India, as is done everywhere else. I do not think that Government should take up a limited employment agency of that sort when the employers of labour themselves have not tried any scheme, except the existing one, of recruiting labour.

A-3009. If the employers do not have it, cannot Government do it ? Do you think that Government should not try any scheme of a limited nature ?—(Mr. Ewbank). As far as Government are concerned, they express no opinion on this subject ; they are waiting for guidance from your Commission.

A-3010. The Commission wants guidance from Government. If Government are not willing to express an opinion on that question, I would like to ask another question. That is about contractors. I want to know whether the Bombay Government has tried a system of entering a fair wages clause in the public contracts given by them ?—This is a matter on which I am afraid I am not in a position to give you an answer. Most of

these contracts are given by the Public Works Department, and I should have to make an enquiry from them as to what their views were. I will make a note of that for our last meeting in case you address on that point.

A-3011. In your memorandum you have quoted the opinion of a lady doctor—"Notwithstanding the fibre-laden atmosphere in work-rooms, these women had better ventilated spaces to work in, than in their own *chawls* where every ventilation space was packed to avoid the ingress of fresh air." Here, the lady doctor seems to think that the windows are closed to avoid fresh air, that is to say that the work-people are afraid of sleeping in an airy room. Might it be that the lady doctor misunderstood the work-people's intention? The work-people sometimes close the windows from a sense of decency; they have only one room to sleep in, and they put some cloth on the window for screening the window, and during the rainy season they do it to prevent the rain water getting in. Are you quite sure that the workmen close the windows in order to avoid fresh air?—(Mr. Gennings). I made no enquiries as to why they do it.

A-3012. Mr. Ewbank has got some knowledge of the people in the villages; are they very much afraid of fresh air?—(Mr. Ewbank) I think people are afraid of night air, but it is quite likely that the motive you mention might have entered into their minds.

A-3013. It has been stated that "In Bombay City no provision has been made by the employers for the education of their adult workers." Have Government done anything in that direction?—The local authorities have started in a few places a certain number of classes for adult workers at night. I am afraid I cannot offhand give you what the number is; I have seen references to them frequently in the Educational Department.

A-3014. Can you give some information as to what effort Government is making towards adult education?—The main effort of Government is directed to primary, secondary and collegiate education, including technical. We consider that the education of the children has the first claim on Government. Where in particular areas some charitable agency starts an adult class, we are sympathetic and help them as far as our funds allow. But it is not one of the primary objects to which Government is directing its efforts.

A-3015. May I take it that the Government are not doing much?—Yes.

A-3016. Do Government help co-operative societies of the industrial classes by advancing them any money?—That is a matter that is dealt with in the Revenue Department. I should hesitate to answer.

A-3017. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: They do not give loans to industrial societies?—No; they do not give any loans to any kind of co-operative society, except housing societies.

A-3018. *Mr. Joshi*: Would it not be an encouragement to co-operative societies of workers, if they were given some advances? I realize the difficulties; I do not say that there are no difficulties. But if taking some risk Government give some advances, will they not thus encourage a very useful movement?—My personal opinion is that it is always risky to start a society with the aid of a Government loan, and it is only in very exceptional circumstances after detailed enquiry into the condition of the members that such a loan would be justifiable.

A-3019. Then, as regards workmen's compensation your Government is against compulsory insurance but prefer making workmen preferential creditors. It may happen that compulsory insurance is really useful; in the case of the employee of a small employer, who may not have large capital, a workman cannot get much unless there is compulsory insurance?—(Mr. Gennings). Yes, but with the Act framed as it is now I do not think there is a great deal of danger of that because it is only to very large and organized industries, that is to say factories with 20 or more people, that the Act applies.

A-3020. Yes, but we are now thinking of extending the Act and your Government is willing to extend it to others.—Well, I can only say that I have not come across a case where the workman has not got compensation owing to the failure of the employer to pay.

A-3021. *The Chairman*: Do you know of any country where there is compulsory insurance?—I would not say there are not, but I cannot recollect any.

A-3022. It is not the case in England at present?—No.

A-3023. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you know that the Royal Commission on Transport in England has recommended that with regard to accidents happening on roads?—Yes, a third-party insurance for motor cars: I know that.

A-3024. *Mr. Joshi*: It is stated that Government are supported in this view by the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association. I was wondering how the Ahmedabad Association expressed that view to Government. Did you receive their views from them?—

I think that the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association sometimes expresses its views in its publications. In this case we received it from the Labour Association.

A-3025. They do not mind co-operating with you. There is no mention in your memorandum as to whether it is desirable to have an Employers' Liability Act or not. I want to know whether your Government have considered the question, because it is one of the subjects in our questionnaire.—(Mr. Ewbank) No. The Bombay Government have not considered that question.

A-3026. It is a subject on our list. I would like the Bombay Government to consider and let us have their views.—(Mr. Gennings). Liability of employers for negligence on their part in case of accidents where a worker gets killed or injured?

A-3027. Modify the civil law incorporating the doctrine of employers' liability. When the Government of India introduced the Workmen's Compensation Bill, the draft bill provided for employers' liability also, but the select committee dropped that portion. I want to know whether we cannot revive that legislation now. Turning to the question of the reduction of maximum hours cannot the Labour Office collect some figures, some data, about the state of production now when a change has been made from 12 hours to 10 hours? If any experiments have been made with shorter hours than ten, we want some figures of production with such shorter hours. Can you help us in that matter?—(Mr. Gennings) I think there would be enormous difficulty at this length of time to collect anything like accurate or approximate figures.

Sir Victor Sassoon: That is not Mr. Joshi's point. His question is whether experiments with shorter hours than ten hours have been tried in Bombay.

A-3028. *Mr. Joshi*: Yes, and whether you can get comparative figures of production when the hours were twelve and after they were reduced to ten, and also figures of production with shorter hours than ten if such shorter hours were introduced.—You might ask Mr. Johnstone about that. I think he has done some work along those lines.

A-3029. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Where did the Tariff Board get their figures from?—They did not get them from us.

A-3030. *Mr. Joshi*: You mention that "In the case of Bombay, 19 mills employing a little over fifty thousand workers out of a total number of 75 working mills employing 148,000 workers were selected in consultation with the Bombay Millowners' Association and the Bombay Textile Labour Union." Have you got any written statement from the Bombay Textile Labour Union on that point?—We have got no written statement.

A-3031. Then, it is your mere impression?—Yes. I think we got a list prepared in our office in consultation with the Millowners' Association and submitted it to you, and you were not prepared to say whether it was a good one, a bad one or an indifferent one.

A-3032. You made a list in consultation with the Millowners' Association, and after preparing it you had a casual conversation with me and you asked my opinion. I would certainly have given my opinion if you had consulted me at the same time and in the same way as you consulted the Millowners' Association, but I was not prepared to help you as you consulted me in the way you did.—In connection with Ahmedabad we adopted the same procedure.

A-3033. Is it not a fact that you consulted me during the course of a private conversation, when you had prepared the list in consultation with the Bombay Millowners' Association?—No. I was not aware that that was the position. We prepared a list ourselves from our own knowledge and records. First of all we showed it to the Millowners' Association and accepted certain amendments that they made, and then I showed it to you.

Mr. Joshi: You showed it to me in a casual way at a meeting for which you were not responsible. I had gone to your office and you talked to me about it and you wanted my opinion about it.

The Chairman: I have noted that.

A-3034. Mr. Gennings, you are the Registrar of Trade Unions, and you combine that duty with your Directorship of Information, Directorship of the Labour Office and Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation. May I ask you whether you regard yourself as a judicial officer in your capacity as Registrar of Trade Unions?—Certainly.

A-3035. Supposing that on some occasion you publish certain things in your *Labour Gazette* regarding certain unions, which may not be proved to be correct afterwards, do you not think your position will be compromised in that way?—I do not think so at all, any more than it will compromise my position when I am sitting as Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation.

A-3036. I will put a concrete case. Supposing there is a dispute about a certain union being registered or not registered—you know that there was a case about the Sholapur Union being registered or not registered—being a judicial officer you may sometimes have to pronounce a judicial opinion upon that, but in your capacity as Director of the Labour Office you publish some information regarding that union, which from the labour point of view may be wrong, and further as Director of the Labour Office you may have called the Assistant Secretary of that union and had talks with him, not judicially but informally, as to how that particular branch could be called a registered union. In the circumstances, do you not think that your action as Director of the Labour Office would be inconsistent with the judicial position you hold as Registrar of Trade Unions?—No, because as Registrar of Trade Unions, before I register a union, if I am not satisfied that the application form contains all the information I wanted, I have power to ask the Secretaries to come to me and discuss whether or not the composition of the body that they propose to register is a trade union or not a trade union. It is a matter of constant occurrence.

A-3037. There was no application from that branch to you at all. There was no application from the Sholapur branch, and you called the Secretary of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. You may say that you did that as Director of the Labour Office as you wanted information. My point is that your action in that way was inconsistent with your duties as Registrar of Trade Unions?—No, because I had not begun to function as Registrar. My recollection is that there was nothing in that particular incident which would have affected me at all as Registrar.

A-3038. It may affect you in this way. In the first place you have made enquiries which as a judicial officer you are not entitled to make before the case comes before you. Secondly, you get yourself committed in your *Labour Gazette* to a certain statement of fact, and it is quite possible, taking human nature into consideration, that after once getting yourself committed to a certain statement, it will be difficult for you to give a fair decision as Registrar of Trade Unions?—It is not my statement of facts. So far as the *Labour Gazette* is concerned, I receive information from various quarters. I do not guarantee the accuracy of any statement. So far as the Sholapur Union was concerned, the statement was that it was a branch of the Bombay Textile Labour Union.

A-3039. When you publish information about trade unions you take such information from the secretaries of the unions?—Yes, if they send it to me.

A-3040. Otherwise, you make enquiries?—We send them a circular letter asking them to furnish information.

A-3041. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The question is, can you be a prosecutor and judge at the same time?—The District Magistrate under the executive orders of Government has to supply information as to whether there are any trade unions in his district or not, and so far as outside of Bombay and Ahmedabad is concerned, any information as to the formation of trade unions comes either from the district magistrate or from the union itself.

A-3042. *Mr. Joshi*: May I ask why you did not ask for information from the Secretary of the Union, but depended upon the information given by the District Magistrate?—We should make enquiries, the next time when we send out our schedule from the Secretary to fill in. We do not know whether a trade union has been formed or not if the Secretary does not notify it to us.

A-3043. *Miss Power*: In the Chief Inspector's report he shows us the enormous reduction in the number of children employed in the factories in Bombay. Practically speaking there are no children employed. The figure for 1928 is 122. Where are those children now? Are they in school, or are they working in unregistered factories, or are they on the streets?—(Mr. Ewbank) In certain parts of Bombay compulsory education has been introduced.

A-3044. Are those the F and G wards?—Yes. In these wards no doubt most of the children are going to school. In other wards there is a gradual increase in the number of children going to school. Some of these children are therefore probably attending school. Of the rest I know nothing.

A-3045. Are there any statistics to show whether there is any increase in the number of children employed in unregistered places of employment since their numbers in the mill have been reduced?—(Mr. Gennings) Mr. Johnstone will be able to say that. We have nothing on record with us.

A-3046. I have been told that in the F and G wards out of 14,000 children there are 3,000 children (or approximately 22 per cent.) who are not attending school. What sort of compulsion is meant by the phrase "compulsory education"?—(Mr. Ewbank) You mean: what are the sanctions.

A-3047. If there is compulsory education in F and G wards how are the children brought into school?—The administration of the Primary Education Act in Bombay is vested in the Bombay Corporation and it is for them to decide to what extent and by what method they should enforce compulsion.

A-3048. Is there any difference in the methods used by the Municipality for bringing children into school in places where there is compulsory education and where there is not?—I believe that in the case of compulsory education the magistrate has got the power to fine a parent or imprison him for 24 hours if he does not obey the law. As this is a matter entirely in the hands of the Corporation I am afraid I cannot say offhand what the arrangement is.

A-3049. Dealing with housing you give statistics regarding the number of houses put up by various organizations such as Government, Municipality and so forth. But there are no statistics to enable us to see what are considered to be the minimum requirements for housing the existing industrial population and what is the present deficiency. Do such figures exist?—(Mr. Gennings) In 1919, after the War, the Municipal Commission estimated that there would be a shortage of 50,000 tenements for housing 250,000 people in Bombay. Government therefore prepared an industrial housing scheme as part of the development scheme.

A-3050. *The Chairman* : Were they persons or families?—50,000 tenements for 50,000 families of five persons each on an average.

A-3051. *Miss Power* : Was that one room per tenement?—Yes. The industrial housing scheme of the Development Department provided originally for 50,000 tenements. Government have actually constructed 16,500 tenements and a large proportion of them, approximately 10,000 are at the present moment vacant.

A-3052. What are the reasons for their being vacant?—A large variety of reasons has been given. One is that Worli is too far off.

A-3053. Are all the 10,000 tenements at Worli?—They are mostly at Worli. Some of them are at DeLisle Road and some of them are at Naigaum. The proportion of empties in *chawls* which are right in the centre of the working class area is very much smaller. Naigaum has a certain number of empties. DeLisle Road is more or less full and Sewri also is fairly full.

A-3054. Dealing with housing it is stated that sub-letting is not prevalent to the same extent in Ahmedabad and Sholapur as it is in Bombay. What is the reason for that? It strikes a casual observer that over-crowding is very much the same here as in those two places. Then, why should there be a sub-letting problem in Bombay and not in Ahmedabad or Sholapur?—In Bombay there are a large number of single men—grass widowers—whose families are away. They always go in for boarding.

A-3055. Is there a higher percentage of such men here than in Ahmedabad? Do you think that that is the main reason for the sub-letting problem in Bombay?—I would not like to express an opinion. I have not considered the reasons. Possibly Mrs. Wagh will be able to help you there.

A-3056. With regard to unregulated places of employment, have Government got any figures to show the percentage of the employed population of Bombay that is working in unregulated places of employment?—I have no figures. Perhaps Mr. Johnstone will be able to give an estimate.

A-3057. Do they come under the Factory Inspection Department?—No.

A-3058. Why then should he be asked?—Because he is interested in factories generally. Some of these unregistered factories may have been on his register some time or other and afterwards have been struck off. Naturally he would try to keep in touch with them to see if they again employed the same number of people which originally had brought them under the Factories Act. Factories go on and off the register according to the number of people employed.

A-3059. One of the difficulties suggested by Government in including unregulated shops with power employing ten persons and upwards with or without power, is the cost of inspection. Can you give us an estimate of the cost of inspection, assuming that the volume of inspection in the unregulated places is the same as at present in the case of the regulated places? What would be the approximate additional cost?—I have not the figures with me. Mr. Johnstone might be able to supply them.

A-3060. But this does not come into his sphere of work. I cannot see that he has anything to do with such an estimate.—In a matter of this kind Mr. Johnstone will be in a better position to help you than we could possibly be, because he could give an approximate idea of how many unregulated factories there are, where they are and what staff will be required for their inspection.

A-3061. I will ask Mr. Johnstone. Could we have an estimate from the Labour Office of the cost of the domestic budget enquiries in Ahmedabad in 1924, and the one in Sholapur in 1925?—I shall let you have those figures.

A-3062. Yes, what I want is the cost to Government of a budget enquiry in one year which is considered sufficiently extensive to be acceptable?—Yes, I shall let you have those figures.

A-3063. *Mr. Asavle*: Your memorandum shows that the percentage of persons born in Bombay to the total population has been steadily decreasing and is less in 1921 than in 1911. Is that due to the fact that a large number of workmen live in small houses where there is no sufficient accommodation for confinement, and therefore send their women to the villages for confinement?—(Mr. Ewbank) It is difficult to generalize on a subject like this. You know the conditions in which most of the population live and if you say that confinement cannot suitably take place in such limited accommodation, you will only be drawing a natural inference.

A-3064. Is there not also an additional reason for these women going out of Bombay for confinement, that they have to spend more here for confinement than at their own places?—But we have erected these Development Department *chawls* with a little more accommodation and these *chawls* are empty.

A-3065. The *chawls* at DeLisle Road and Naigaum are 'all fairly full; only those at Worli are not occupied because they are far away from the industrial area. In your memorandum you say that owing to the system of early marriage the majority of women employed in factories in this Presidency are married, and that they find it difficult to take care of their children. Have you made any enquiries as to why many of these women workers have to work under these circumstances even though they have children?—(Mr. Gennings). We have not made any specific enquiry into the subject.

A-3066. Do you not think that an enquiry should be made?—Yes, it could be made.

A-3067. In your memorandum you say that "neither rationalization nor standardization has yet been introduced in the textile industry in Bombay city and the Government of Bombay has no information in its possession to suggest that unemployment exists amongst industrial workers to any serious extent." Are you aware that such a system has been introduced in some of the Mills in Bombay?—Yes.

A-3068. Do you not think that this was one of the causes of the general strike here?—(Mr. Ewbank). We have the report of the Court of Inquiry which shows what the causes were.

A-3069. The Labour Office suggested that the strike took place when this system was introduced. Was not this the chief cause of the general strike of 1928-29?—The Committee referred to before has found that this was one of the chief causes.

A-3070. Has the appointment of a special recruiting officer brought about any change in the recruitment of shipping hands?—Questions relating to seamen and shipping generally are matters for the Government of India and not for the Government of Bombay. Mr. Woodhead has already been before the Commission to answer questions connected with seamen.

A-3071. *The Chairman*: There is a reference to the special recruiting officer who has been recently appointed. Has he been appointed by the Government of Bombay or the Government of India?—He is appointed by the Government of India and paid for by the Government of India.

A-3072. *Mr. Lallji*: You have the Labour Office and also a Director of Industries. Have you found out the cause of depression in the cotton textile industry?—(Mr. Ewbank). I think the Tariff Board's enquiry has indicated a large number of reforms required in the mill industry and these have not been carried out.

A-3073. But has any department of your Government made any enquiries in that respect?—I do not think any specific enquiry in that respect was made by the Government of Bombay.

A-3074. Does not the Director of Industries take any interest in this cotton textile industry?—It is not within his sphere to do so.

A-3075. Within whose sphere then does that lie?—In the sphere of the mill-owners.

A-3076. Although this is one of the most important industries in this Presidency the Government of Bombay have not taken any initiative in the matter?—The millowners are sufficiently able and enlightened to take care of their interests, and if they required any assistance from Government in any matter they would have come forward. Therefore Government themselves have not taken the initiative in making any such enquiry.

A-3077. Have the Government made any enquiries as to how the strikers maintained themselves during the five months of strike?—(Mr. Gennings) We have made no statistical enquiry at all.

A-3078. *The Chairman* : How many of them went back to the villages?—We have not been able to ascertain the number accurately. But a rough estimate on the basis of the figures relating to fares paid on the railways and steamers would give us 20,000 to 30,000 people.

A-3079. *Mr. Lallji* : Were they all starving?—I should think it was possibly what some of them did.

A-3080. Is the representation of labour on bodies like the Legislative Council, the Corporation and the Port Trust adequate?—(Mr. Ewbank). That is not a question I can easily answer. Nomination of labour representatives to these bodies is quite a recent principle. A beginning has now been made.

A-3081. Have Government taken any action in the matter of closing the liquor shops on pay days as recommended by the Excise Committee?—I am afraid we do not know. We have to make enquiries.

A-3082. Will you be surprised if you are told that Government have not done anything since the Committee reported on the matter?—You evidently know the answer to the question.

A-3083. But will the Government take any action in the matter?—I will make enquiries of the Department concerned.

A-3084. What is the amount that Government have spent on the development *chawls*?—I am sorry we have not the information here.

A-3085. Could you give us a rough idea of the loss incurred on the investment or how much less than 5 per cent. you get?—I cannot give you those figures at present.

A-3086. *Col. Russell* : In your memorandum it is stated that the "main cause of their ill-health appears to be the prevalence of malaria in localities in which they live." What action has Government taken or is proposing to take to eradicate this evil?—(Mr. Ewbank). We have appointed Major Covell as special officer for this purpose. He investigated into the matter and since then the Municipality has taken action. Wells have been closed and so on. This is again a matter for the Municipality. We can obtain for your information a report from the Municipality of the action taken by them in this direction, and what they propose to do hereafter.

A-3087. Has the Director of Public Health any instructions from the Government of Bombay with regard to the question of malaria in Bombay?—I cannot remember that he has.

A-3088. As malaria is such an important disease all over India, as Major Covell has definitely said that the prevalence of malaria is the main cause of ill-health in Bombay and as Government have also admitted that the health conditions are unsatisfactory owing to this disease, do they propose to take any definite action to compel the millowners to do something in connection with this matter, seeing that "the correlation between the intensity of malaria and the proximity of mills is most striking", which suggests that malaria is caused by the mills?—We have no reason to suppose that the action which the Municipality is taking on this report is inadequate. I shall obtain a report from the Municipality on the action taken by them and pass it on to you. If you think that the action taken by the Municipality is inadequate, Government will certainly consider the matter further.

A-3089. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola* : Are not the Municipality maintaining a special malaria department?—I believe they are.

A-3090. *Col. Russell* : In the Government memorandum it is stated that in the City of Bombay there are five large hospitals with 832 beds. Are these all the hospital beds for the whole city of Bombay?—Yes. But I have not personally verified the figures.

A-3091. But are there no municipal hospitals or other hospitals?—There is one Municipal hospital with 300 beds.

A-3092. Then there are only 1,132 beds for the whole city?—Yes.

A-3093. *Mr. Cliff* : Could you let us have a memorandum dealing with the control of the manufacture and sale of country liquor?—From what point of view would you like to have it. Would you like a mere descriptive account of how it is manufactured?

A-3094. We are told that labourers here generally drink heavily. I went to one shop this morning which has been licensed for the sale of country spirit. I was told that Government controlled the manufacture of this country spirit?—Yes.

A-3095. Would it possible for you to give us a memorandum dealing with the method of manufacture, the regulations regarding the hours of sale in shops and the revenue obtained from this source in the city and in the Presidency separately?—Yes.

A-3096. Do the budgets which have been prepared for Ahmedabad and Sholapur, accurately represent the standard of life of the working people referred to in the Bombay Government memorandum in those budgets in those two cities?—(Mr. Gennings) Yes, in the opinion of the Labour Office they do.

A-3097. It says that the Government of Bombay have already under contemplation the revision of the Bombay working class cost of living index number. Is there any possibility of that being done very soon?—So far as the Bombay working class cost of living index number is concerned, the revision is taking the form of a new index number on a new base, and that cannot be prepared until we have a family budget enquiry.

A-3098. Is it proposed to have a family budget enquiry very soon. I am anxious to know what "under contemplation" means?—Yes. In fact, the strike of 1928, which lasted six months, prevented us from undertaking one then. The strike of 1929 also prevented us from undertaking one, because we want to see about a year ahead before we can undertake a family budget enquiry; a general strike would simply kill the whole enquiry.

A-3099. Can it be taken that the conditions are sufficiently normal for an enquiry to be commenced now?—I should not think they were.

A-3100. How long do you think one would have to wait before conditions might be taken as being normal?—It would really depend on what is the outcome of the discussions which have to take place at some time on the report of the Fawcett Committee, whether that will have the effect of disturbing labour or not.

A-3101. But there are no strikes going on at the present time?—There are not.

A-3102. In fact 6 mills are closed, but labour has generally resumed?—Yes; and it is possible too that those mills will never open again.

A-3103. How long would it take to have a budget enquiry in Bombay?—The collection of the budgets will take about a year; then they have got to be tabulated.

A-3104. I am exercised in my mind as to whether it is possible in the city of Bombay to maintain a proper standard of health with an income of Rs. 27; do you care to express an opinion on that?—No, I am not prepared to express an opinion on that.

A-3105. Is there any one in your office who would be capable of expressing an opinion on that?—I do not think so, because it would have to be the combined opinion of various types of experts; for instance, a biochemist or food expert would have to express an opinion as to what should be bought and what are the food values. There are so many standards and so many different types of working classes; one would have to consider the various staples and which cost more or less than others. I expect you have in view a minimum wage based upon a standard of living.

A-3106. I find that with regard to Railway Companies, the Post Office, certain industries and the Municipality, a man has to pass a certain standard of health before he is admitted into that employment; I wonder whether it is possible for you to express an opinion with regard to the standard that is required for entering into such an occupation and maintaining that standard on an income of Rs. 27 a month?—I would not like to express an opinion.

A-3107. In the memorandum of the Government of Bombay the report of the Fawcett Committee is quoted dealing with the problem of the minimum wage. It is pointed out that they appreciate the contention that the standard of comfort of textile workers in Bombay is exceedingly low. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

A-3108. Following upon the enquiries which have been made from time to time with regard to rates of wages in certain industries, what are the earnings of the average adult male worker per month in this city?—We have worked it out, but I could not say off-hand; I can let you have that figure for the cotton mill industry.

A-3109. Can you carry it further than the cotton industry?—No.

A-3110. Can you furnish that figure with regard to Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur both for adult men and women?—Yes, we can do that for all three centres as at 1926.

A-3111. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Could I have the figure for 1914 as well ?—There are no labour statistics collected by labour office methods which could enable me to give you the 1914 figure.

A-3112. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You are speaking of the average wage figure. What would be the maximum pay which you would include in that ?—It would include labour such as jobbers.

A-3113. Up to Rs. 150 a month ?—Yes, we could have wages up to that figure.

A-3114. Would you merely take the average of the different rates ?—We should get a weighted average.

Mr. Cliff : In the Government memorandum it is stated that the Port Trust have had an enquiry into the cost of living, and it is stated that the result of that has not yet been published ?—That was an enquiry that the Labour Office made, a sort of tentative family budget enquiry amongst Port Trust workers.

A-3115. Was that conducted by trained investigators ?—It was conducted by our lady investigators, yes.

A-3116. Could we have a copy of that report ?—It has not reached the stage of a report. We collected information to see whether we could get from it any data for an enquiry into the earnings of casual workers, and we came to the conclusion that we could not.

A-3117. It says that it is not yet published, which implies that it is to be published ?—I do not think we shall publish it. It is a matter for Government to consider, but I do not think they will publish it, because the budgets were collected with great difficulty and it did not quite touch the class of people that we wanted to get hold of. We wanted to get hold of casual workers and we were not able to do so.

A-3118. So that it is not sufficiently conclusive to be published ?—Yes, it is not sufficiently conclusive to be published as a Labour Office publication.

A-3119. In your enquiry into the rates of wages in the cotton industry, did you ever obtain the average earnings of *badlis* ?—No, we specifically excluded those from our enquiry.

A-3120. Why did you exclude them ?—Because they form such an uncertain factor. When you are dealing with actual earnings in a particular industry you must I think provide for the bulk of the workers, and those people who are regularly employed. I think that is done in all wage enquiries : it is only the regular employee in a factory that you consider.

A-3121. But I understand this industry is dependent upon that spare staff ?—Yes ; we can calculate the wages of *badlis*, but it would only be the *badli* in one particular mill. One day he may be in one mill and another day in another mill.

A-3122. I think the Fawcett Committee recommended that there should be a reserve staff which should be paid irrespective of whether it worked or not ?—Yes, but from the point of view of an official statistical collecting agency, we cannot trace these *badlis* from one mill to another.

A-3123. But you know from the pay books of the mill what they pay the *badlis* and the number of men employed ?—We could find out the actual number of *badlis* employed during the month and the actual amount of wages they earned ; but a *badli* will go to half a dozen mills in the course of a month.

A-3124. I agree. If you cannot give us the earnings, can you give us any indication of the amount of employment they obtain ?—No, I am afraid I could not do that.

A-3125. Is it possible to give us an estimate of the amount of unemployment there is in Bombay ?—No, I do not think you could get any reliable estimates.

The Chairman : Have you in mind men who have worked in Bombay and are now out of employment, or do you also include men who have come to Bombay from the villages in search of work but have never yet worked in Bombay ?

Mr. Cliff : I did not include that class. As I understand from the report, there is a fairly stable population in Ahmedabad ; there is a similar state of affairs in Sholapur ; but there is not the same state of affairs in Bombay. I am anxious to see whether we can ascertain on any fairly reliable estimate the amount of unemployment there is in this city.

The Chairman : If that is attempted, what I should like also would be the average number of men and women at any one time who come into Bombay in search of work, which add to the population of the city, but who do not become workers in the city.

A-3126. *Mr. Cliff* : Yes, they must be kept separate ?—The latter figure of course would be quite impossible. It would be impossible to trace the number of men coming into Bombay looking for work ; there is nothing on which we could base that.

A-3127. *The Chairman* : You could not even say 10 or 20 thousand ?—I would not even like to make an approximation within such wide limits as that.

A-3128. I gather that except in certain seasons when the people are needed in their villages, it is a very large addition to the temporary population of the city ; they come in in the form of lodgers in search of work and lodge with people whom they know ?—Yes, I think there is a fairly large proportion. (Mr. Gennings) The only basis that you could go on would be to communicate with all the factory employers and large employers of labour and ask them how many they are employing now as compared with any given period or any given date, adding to it the factories that are closed and subtracting the factories that are newly opened. In connection with the census for 1931 we have asked that the forms should provide for the collection of information of that kind. But where you have no organization, where your workers are not obtained through trade unions or anything of that kind, it is difficult, almost impossible, to say how many people are unemployed, except in a very rough way.

A-3129. *Mr. Cliff* : I appreciate the difficulties, but I am anxious to see whether it is possible to give us any estimate that can be regarded as fairly reliable ?—May I put it this way ? Shall we endeavour to obtain, by the way I have suggested, certain figures and submit them, not as carrying the approval of the Labour Office—the Labour Office will accept no responsibility for them—but explaining what we have done, how we obtained those figures, and leaving it for the Commission to say whether they regard them as of any value.

A-3130. If you can do anything which you think would be of service to the Commission I am sure the Commission would be obliged to you ?—You appreciate that I do not want to put in any figures which I am not convinced in my own mind are accurate.

A-3131. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You can at the same time give an idea of the percentage of the error ?—Yes, certainly. All that we could do would be to carry out what I suggested ; that is to say, we could explain to the Commission exactly what we have got and how we have got it.

A-3132. *Mr. Cliff* : With regard to the proposal to try to find the amount of unemployment under the census, may we take it that it is the concern of the Government to find the amount of unemployment in the State ?—Yes ; Government would naturally like to know as part of its ordinary social statistics the extent of unemployment.

A-3133. Is there any attempt to measure under employment ?—You mean short-time ?

A-3134. Yes ?—No ; we have made no attempt.

Mr. Cliff : I went through a mill this morning where 48 *badlis* had actually been engaged this morning and approximately 50 had been turned away. That indicates that there is the unemployment problem here.

A-3135. Under the heading “Control exercised over working conditions” in your memorandum you say “In the case of large concentrated works, camps are laid out by Government Engineers and proper provision is made for water supply, sanitation, medical assistance, etc.” Would you define what is a “large concentrated work” ?—(Mr. Ewbank) It depends upon the circumstances of the case. In a town where dispensaries and other facilities exist, it would be less necessary to provide special facilities than it would be if you go out to a country-place or some exceptional place like the Sukkur Barrage. I do not think we could possibly define what we mean by “a large concentrated work”.

A-3136. Take the Sukkur Barrage. How does it work in that case ?—I think you yourself have seen it.

A-3137. Yes, but I am asking you to tell me how it really works out. What is the control exercised there ?—We know that there is a dispensary there, a special doctor and a hospital. I understand that the Public Works Department have employed sanitary inspectors to look after the sanitary arrangements. As regards housing, I am not sure, but I understand they have put up temporary huts for their labour, or have provided the contractor, I think, with the material for putting up temporary huts.

A-3138. I notice the phrase in your memorandum “Occasionally materials are hired or loaned to contractors for housing their workmen”, but having visited the barrage myself I know that provision for shelter is not made in the drag lines ?—I think there are not very many people on the excavating machines ; I imagine that about a dozen men are employed on a machine.

A-3139. Will you tell us what is the general policy of the Government in this matter?—The Government has no definite system of dealing with the question, but, broadly speaking, it may be said that the attitude of Government is that it should be a good employer according to the prevailing standards, and as local circumstances alter so the Government, without fixing any definite standard, modifies its actions according to the circumstances and tries to be a good employer. We have to consider also the economy of public money in the matter in creating dispensaries for only a handful of men.

A-3140. The barrage work is largely one which is let out on contract. Would it not be reasonable on the part of the Government to require that at least shelter should be provided for labour employed by contractors?—I think it is desirable.

A-3141. I want to know whether the Government consult the trade unions when labour legislation is being considered?—Yes, in all cases.

A-3142. Is it possible for you to tell us why the post of the Director of Labour was abolished?—(Mr. Gennings) I think it was for the administrative convenience of Government.

A-3143. That would be the sole reason?—(Mr. Ewbank) I think also as a matter of retrenchment.

A-3144. Under "Industrial Disputes" you say, "As experience and knowledge are gained and the activities of the Labour office (that is, the Bombay Labour Office) develop it will promote the settlement of industrial disputes when they arise." May I ask whether the Labour Office takes an opportunity of dealing with disputes before there is an actual stoppage of labour?—(Mr. Gennings) No; this particular object of the Labour Office was never put into force by Government. I think, on reconsideration, Government decided that it would perhaps be better if they did not take part in the settlement of industrial disputes. I think they probably had in their mind an organization with conciliation officers as at the Ministry of Labour.

A-3145. I was going to ask you whether there is any objection on the part of Government to have an Industrial Relationship Department similar to what there is in England?—(Mr. Ewbank) I will make enquiries on that point. You want the view of the Government?

A-3146. Yes. It is called the Industrial Relationship Department, and if a dispute is apprehended the officers of the ministry may get into touch with both parties before the actual dispute takes place?—(Mr. Gennings) You will appreciate the difficulty of the setting up by Government of an Industrial Relationship Department where conciliation machinery does not exist in industry, because, as shown by the strikes here, they take place without any previous negotiation between the parties; that makes it rather difficult.

A-3147. Is that an absolute statement?—It would not be absolute, but the proportion is so infinitely great that it is almost a statement of fact.

A-3148. *Divan Chaman Lall*: Is not your experience that in many cases the unions make their representations to the employers and they are not listened to?—That does happen. But what I mean is that there is no conciliation machinery such as is laid down by the Fawcett Committee which says that it must be done; that such and such a procedure shall be followed, that discussions should go from one party to another party finally culminating in your national board. If there was such an organization we should know of a dispute at the earliest possible moment, because soon after the machinery is started we should know about it.

A-3149. *Mr. Cliff*: We have got presented in these documents the Fawcett mediation rules. Have the Government considered the application of such machinery to other undertakings, like docks, engineering establishments, tramways and other industries?—(Mr. Ewbank) No. The mediation rules are suggested for a particular industry where the need is particularly urgent, and Government have had to wait to see what progress is made, on account of the series of strikes.

A-3150. When you were answering Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that the Government have to wait to see how the situation develops. You have got an illiterate population, you know the construction that can be put on a sentence like that. I put it to you that the work-people here in Bombay are entitled to say to themselves that the way to get conciliation machinery is to strike?—The conciliation machinery suggested by the Fawcett Committee was accepted on the side of the millowners and it only remains for the unions concerned to endorse it also before it can be brought into force.

A-3151. You say it is because of the urgency, and the urgency being strikes in this industry?—The urgency is to save the industry from this disastrous series of strikes.

A-3152. I agree. Is it not right that other industries where workmen have got to make representations of a similar character should not also have conciliation machinery?—I think it is desirable.

A-3153. Therefore is it not proper that the Government should consider the question of the application of similar mediation rules to other industries before disaster occurs in those industries?—There is no objection to Government considering the question, but you will remember that the mediation rules were only suggested for the first time in March last.

A-3154. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can the Government force the mediation rules?—No; it is purely a question of consent by both the parties.

A-3155. *Mr. Cliff*: But the Government may enact legislation, not forcing the machinery but making provision for the machinery. At the moment you have no status before a dispute occurs. Would it be opportune for you to consult the Government on that aspect? The Government might enact legislation providing for conciliation machinery and joint industrial council machinery?—(Mr. Gennings) Might I refer you to our memorandum in this connection?

A-3156. May I take it that this paragraph in your Memorandum expresses the opinion of the Bombay Government?—Yes.

Mr. Cliff: Can it be considered whether it is possible for a similar machinery as is provided in the Fawcett Report to be applied to any other industry in this city and presidency?—The opinion of Government may be taken on that point.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Am I right in saying that the machinery laid down by the Fawcett Committee is in the nature of an almost daily or weekly contact between the employers and labour in an industry irrespective of whether there was a dispute pending or not, whereas the Trade Disputes Act comes into force if there is any dispute or a likelihood of a dispute?

Mr. Cliff: Yes. The Fawcett Report provides for means for interpretation of the existing standing orders.

Sir Victor Sassoon: It is merely a machinery to prevent the possibility of the occurrence of a dispute.

Mr. Cliff: What I am saying is that other men are working under wage agreements and under settled conditions of labour. They want similarly to have an opportunity of making the same kind of representation that can be made in the cotton industry. We have got it in the cotton industry because of the urgency; let us have it in the other industries because of the rightness of it.

Sir Victor Sassoon: The Fawcett Report did not anticipate that there should be any legislation to this effect; they wanted that it should be a voluntary matter between the employer and the labour.

The witness: (Mr. Gennings) It is perfectly open in any industry for either side to adopt similar measures.

Sir Victor Sassoon: There is not the slightest suggestion that there should be legislation to this effect.

The witness: (Mr. Ewbank) In what way do you suggest that we should take the initiative?

Mr. Cliff: You have got a machinery for the cotton industry.....

The Chairman: It is not in operation; the Committee have only sketched out a machinery.

Mr. Cliff: Yes, it is not in operation, but the party which does not accept it will be at a decided disadvantage with public opinion. But that is done, as I understand, because of the urgency and the disease coming on the industry. I should like to say "apply that to other industries because of its rightness".

The Chairman: What you are suggesting is not an action on the part of Government.

Mr. Cliff: Take the Government of Bombay's memorandum to which my attention was drawn. Writing to the Government of India they suggested that "the gap should be filled". Having the Fawcett Report, which is a report of the Bombay Government, can lessons be learnt out of that and a similar machinery applied to other industries?

The Chairman: They do not say that the Government should fill up the gap. What they say is "the gap should be filled by the establishment of conciliation machinery

within an industry itself set up by the parties concerned". Would not an initiative on the part of Government be resented by both parties in the industry?

The witness : (Mr. Gennings) I think the intention of the Government of Bombay was that before you had your Trade Disputes Act you should have some law passed, as was done in England, providing for the setting up of conciliation machinery. There was an Act before you had your Trade Disputes Act providing for conciliation and arbitration.

A-3157. *Sir Alexander Murray :* You mean the Whitley Councils?—I cannot recollect the provisions of the Act now, but I think for every industry it was provided that conciliation machinery should be set up, and as a result of that machinery, I think, the conciliation officers of the Ministry of Labour were appointed.

A-3158. *Mr. Cliff :* 50 years ago you had boards for the miners definitely put up by legislation. Then you had a legislation following upon the Whitley Councils' Report. I understand it is the opinion of the Bombay Government that that is desirable?—*(Mr. Ewbank)* Yes.

A-3159. I am told that the Government of Bombay have not considered applying the spirit underlying the Fawcett Report and the kind of machinery to other industries. I want to ask if they will consider it and tell us?—The question I ask—if you will allow me to repeat it—is in what way do you suggest that we should take the initiative, because that would help us a great deal. We admit it is desirable.

A-3160. You mean with regard to approach?—Yes.

A-3161. I do not think the Government will be going out of their sphere if they suggest to other industries in the Bombay Presidency that they should similarly consider the question of setting up a regular machinery on the lines indicated by the Fawcett Report?—Yes. *(Mr. Gennings)* Where trade unions exist, I take it?

The Chairman : As you know, Mr. Cliff, in the Ministry of Labour there has been a special officer in charge whose duty is to collect and supply information and to assist in the formation of joint industrial councils. Do I take it that that is the direction in which your suggestion to the Labour Office and the Government of Bombay should take?

A-3162. *Mr. Cliff :* Yes. Might I ask how the labour representatives are appointed on the Bombay Council now?—They are nominated by Government.

A-3163. How do they decide that they are labour representatives?—*(Mr. Ewbank)* In the absence of an organization we look out to see who are the men who seem to be taking a lead in labour matters; men who are engaged in some sort of trade unionism and who are not extremists on either side are generally chosen.

A-3164. *Mr. Cliff :* I want to know whether you consult labour organizations?—Not formally. *(Mr. Gennings)* All the nominated members are actually officials or on the executives of trade unions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

TWENTY-SECOND MEETING

BOMBAY

Friday, 22nd November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Barr.*

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E.*

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt., C.B.E.*

Mr. A. G. CLOW, *C.I.E., I.C.S.*

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, *M.L.A.*

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, *M.L.A.*

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, *M.L.A.*

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, *C.B.E.,*

I.M.S. (Medical Assessor).

Mr. HOOSAINBHAI A. LALLJI, *M.L.C.* } (*Assistant Commissioners*).
Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, *M.L.C.*

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } (*Lady Assessors*).
Mrs. K. WAGH.

Mr. S. LALL, *I.C.S.* } (*Joint Secretaries*).
Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. R. B. EWBANK, C.I.E., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of
Bombay, General Department, and Mr. J. F. GENNINGS,
Director of the Labour Office, Bombay.**

Mr. Ewbank: I was asked yesterday by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola (A-2965) to bring here the record of His Excellency the Governor's speeches at the meetings of June the 18th and 21st. I herewith produce them.

The Chairman: Thank you.

A-3165. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Do I take it that in the Municipal Corporation, under legislation passed last year, four seats have been allotted to registered trade unions?—(Mr. Ewbank) Yes.

A-3166. From that does it follow that the policy of the Bombay Government is to help labour to express itself both in the Municipal Corporation and in the local Legislature?—Certainly.

*A-3167. Was there a Bill recently introduced by a private Member in the local Legislature reducing the franchise from Rs. 10 to Rs. 5?—Yes.

A-3168. Was that Bill opposed by the Government?—No, the Government maintained a neutral attitude.

A-3169. If it is the policy of the Local Government to help labour to voice its feelings and to obtain proper representation, why did the Government maintain a neutral attitude?—For various reasons. One was that the municipal franchise had not very long before been reduced to Rs. 10, and Government thought it might be unwise to reduce it again so soon. Another reason was the practical difficulties which would arise by a very large number of additional people coming on the register.

A-3170. Do I take it that the Bombay Government is not opposed in principle to the lowering of the franchise in order to enable the workers to exercise their rights?—I do not think I am in a position to say that the Bombay Government would necessarily agree that the lowering of the franchise was the best way of securing representation for labour at the present stage. They would have to consider the circumstances of each case.

A-3171. If the franchise was lowered, thereby enabling a large number of workers who are not now able to exercise their franchise under the present constitution to do so, would it not necessarily give them a bigger voice both in matters relating to the Corporation and in matters relating to the Council?—Theoretically, yes.

A-3172. That theory, worked out in practice, in other countries, has proved that labour has actually achieved power?—Yes.

A-3173. Do I take it that the Bombay Government would not be opposed to it in principle?—The Bombay Government are, in principle, desirous of giving labour a voice in the administration.

A-3174. A question was put to you yesterday by Mr. Joshi about a confidential report which was made in regard to the Court of Inquiry which was held. You are familiar with the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act. As I read them, under section 12 there is a mandatory duty imposed upon the authorities to publish the reports?—The Report.

A-3175. No, reports?—If you will look at the section you will see it says "report."

A-3176. It says "report or reports"—the final and any interim report?—The confidential report is not an interim report.

A-3177. It says: "shall as soon as possible after receipt by the authority by which the court or board was appointed be published"?—All I can say is that the Chairman of the Court of Inquiry was a High Court judge; one of the members was the Additional Judicial Commissioner in Sind, and the other is a well known Advocate in Bombay and an ex-High Court judge. They submitted a confidential report. In reply to Mr. Joshi yesterday I said I would take the orders of Government as to whether the confidential report might be placed before this Royal Commission.

A-3178. What I am driving at is the principle involved. It is not what you might or might not do now. As I read the Act, there is a mandatory provision imposed. Did you take legal opinion before you accepted this verdict of the Committee not to publish the confidential report?

The Chairman: Surely the action was that of the Court and not that of the local Government.

Divan Chaman Lall: But the Government, under Section 12, is under a mandatory duty to publish the report.

A-3179. *The Chairman*: I take it the position is that this document which has been referred to is not really a report of the Commission?—The report of the Commission has been published. The Commission, in addition, sent in a confidential report which, I do not think it is a breach of confidence if I say it, mainly deals with the defects of the Trade Disputes Act and makes suggestions as to how that Act should be revised.

A-3180. Then it was not a report on the dispute?—No. Although it was called a report, it was more in the nature of a note.

A-3181. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: It was on an entirely different point. It was on the weaknesses of the Trade Disputes Act—something quite outside the terms of reference?—Mainly.

A-3182. *Divan Chaman Lall*: Did it arise out of the dispute and the enquiry held by the Court?—I must appeal to you, Sir, to protect me from further questions on this report because it is confidential.

A-3183. I quite agree, and I will not press you further upon it. Have you taken any orders of Government in regard to placing that document before us?—I said yesterday that I would. The Honourable Member in charge of Labour is at present in Sind.

A-3184. Is it the decided practice of the Government of Bombay in regard to the Trade Disputes Act to receive confidential reports and not to publish them?—This is the first Court which has ever sat under the Trade Disputes Act. No practice has yet been established.

A-3185. This morning's newspapers announced a resolution which was passed by Provincial Congress Committee to the effect that "This meeting is of the emphatic opinion that the police ban on meetings of mill workers is clearly an infringement of the rights and liberties of the people, and should be rescinded forthwith." Is there a ban on meetings of mill workers in the mill areas?—Yes.

A-3186. Under what particular Act?—I think it is under the Police Act.

A-3187. How long has this ban been in existence?—For some six months.

A-3188. When did the riots and the strike cease?—About the middle of September. They gradually died down. There was no definite date.

A-3189. Is this the position, that properly constituted meetings of properly constituted trade unions, if called in the mill areas, cannot be held under this ban?—The matter is one entirely for the Home Department.

The Chairman : How do you bring this within our terms of reference? It seems to me purely a question of the local law and order. How is it industrial?

Diwan Chaman Lall : It is a question in regard to the relations subsisting between the employers and workers. If action is taken by the Government against the workers and not against the employers, surely it is a matter for us to consider whether that is conducive to good feeling between the employers and the workers concerned.

The Chairman : Is it not the case that this is an order which arose out of the recent troubles in connection with meetings in the streets?

Diwan Chaman Lall : Meetings in the mill areas.

The Chairman : And was due to questions of law and order quite apart from any industrial questions?—(Mr. Ewbank). That is so. It is independent of industrial disputes.

Diwan Chaman Lall : That is why I wanted to know why the order also subsists against the holding of properly constituted meetings of properly constituted trade unions.

The Chairman : In the streets or in a building?

Diwan Chaman Lall : Anywhere.

The Chairman : Then so far it would be a legitimate question?—(Mr. Ewbank). The order arose out of the fear that if such meetings were held riots and disturbances were likely to take place. Under the order at present meetings may be held with the permission of the Police Commissioner.

The Chairman : Therefore you claim that it does not act as a ban on proper trade union meetings?

Mr. Cliff : If there is a prohibition of proper trade union meetings, would it not be well to get the person responsible for the order to appear before us?

Sir Victor Sassoon : This is exceptional action and not normal action. I understand that the order will have to come up again within a few days. Whether it will be continued or not, I cannot say, but surely this action was not taken against trade unionism in any way; it was taken against something much more serious, and I cannot see that whatever we might say could prevent any Government taking any action against the holding of any meetings if such action were found necessary in order to uphold law and order.

Mr. Joshi : To my knowledge the annual general meetings of trade unions cannot be held, and have had to be postponed.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Has permission been asked?—(Mr. Ewbank). The position is that the discretion rests with the Commissioner of Police.

The Chairman : I understand this order is one for the protection of life and limb. The only question which concerns us is whether or not it is in effect preventing legitimate meetings of trade unions.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : Perhaps Mr. Ewbank will give us the dates on which the orders were promulgated. They are orders under the Police Act, made by the Commissioner of Police, and they have a limited operation; they have to be re-promulgated from time to time. Perhaps Mr. Ewbank can give us the dates on which the orders were issued, a copy of the orders, the date at which the general strike took place, the date at which the riots began, and the date when the riots were brought under control.

The Chairman : Yes, and then I shall be in a position to judge whether or not we ought to have called before us the Commissioner of Police or the Minister in charge of that Department.

A-3190. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : When the Government of India approached you in regard to the question of the existence of unemployment, and the necessity of having unemployment labour exchanges, what was the opinion expressed by the Government of Bombay? Was the opinion expressed that there was no material change from 1921, and therefore there was no necessity to revise their verdict in regard to the necessity of any machinery for dealing with the subject of unemployment?—(Mr. Gennings). The

reply was to the effect that Government did not consider that unemployment here was a problem which necessitated employment exchanges.

A-3191. On what did the Government base its opinion?—On general knowledge. It could not base it on statistics because there were none. Government formed that opinion on the general results of the observations of its investigators.

A-3192. In your memorandum you say: "But apart from these circumstances there does exist a certain amount of unemployment amongst those desirous of working in the textile industry." Are you revising your verdict as to the existence of unemployment?—No. Government's view was that unemployment did not present a problem.

A-3193. And therefore there was no necessity to deal with it?—There was no necessity for State action.

A-3194. You state that when the standardized muster was brought into operation in October 1928 it displaced 6,000 to 8,000 workers, and you therefore state that standardization would displace some more. Does not that show some necessity for dealing with the unemployment problem?—That is a matter of opinion. Considering how labour is recruited in Bombay, it is quite possible that the majority of those 6,000 returned to their villages and to their land. It is possible that they may have left the mill industry and have gone into some other industry where labour was demanded.

A-3195. I take it that this is merely your opinion?—It must be an opinion.

A-3196. Because you say in your memorandum that you have no statistical basis to go upon?—No, it is purely an opinion.

A-3197. So that the only fact in this statement is that there were 6,000 to 8,000 people displaced?—Yes.

A-3198. And that as the standardization scheme persists there will be more people displaced?—Yes, for which provision will be made by the industry itself if the Fawcett Committee's recommendations are carried out.

A-3199. I take it that rationalization, as it is persisting and will persist, will displace many more workers?—Yes.

A-3200. In your memorandum under the head "unemployment" you give some figures and state "It will be clear from the above figures that in spite of the growth in population the demand for labour has not kept pace with the supply," which means more unemployment?—Yes, provided people remain in Bombay city and do not seek employment elsewhere.

A-3201. So that if we take these statements, they do reveal the existence of unemployment?—Certainly.

A-3202. You say: "As regards the application of the International Conventions relating to unemployment, in the short time at their disposal the Government of Bombay are not in a position to formulate any conclusions." When was the matter of unemployment first brought to the notice of the Government of Bombay? Was it not in 1919?—I cannot say.

A-3203. The Washington Convention regarding the question of labour exchanges was in the year 1919. Was the Government of Bombay circularized, as other local Governments were, in regard to this matter?—No doubt it was.

A-3204. Then you have had 10 solid years from 1919 to 1929, and yet you complain about the shortness of time?—The Government would have naturally considered whether employment exchanges were necessary. Certainly during the periods of 1919, 1921, 1922 it was obvious that there was no necessity for employment exchanges.

A-3205. But after that you had seven solid years to consider this problem. Has any attempt been made by the Bombay Government to deal with the problem since the boom period came to an end?—Government has never been satisfied that there is a problem.

A-3206. Your position is that the Government is not satisfied that there is a problem because it never made an enquiry into the matter?—We have made no statistical enquiry.

A-3207. Therefore you are not in a position to say whether there is a problem or not?—I do not think that follows at all.

A-3208. What I am dealing with now are the facts which I have elicited from your own memorandum?—That a few thousand of the workers have been displaced?

A-3209. And the apprehension of more workers being displaced?—Are you not rather proceeding on the assumption that employment exchanges will create employment?

A-3210. No. I am dealing with the existence of an unemployment problem. I take it that not having gone into this matter the Government of Bombay are not in a position to say whether or not there is any necessity to deal with the question of whether unemployment does exist on such a scale that it should be dealt with by a national agency?—They are not able to say from checked figures that there is such and such a number unemployed in the city of Bombay, who cannot find employment either in the city or elsewhere in the Presidency.

A-3211. The fact as brought out in your memorandum, coupled with the statement appearing in the press this morning regarding the Presidency mill which has closed down and thrown out of employment several thousand workers, reveals the existence of unemployment in the city. Is it the intention of the Government of Bombay, in view of the existence of these facts, to deal with this problem?—These new facts which you have brought out will have to be considered. Obviously if there is a gradual closing down of mills which is shown to be permanent, then the problem will possibly have graver aspects.

A-3212. It is a fact that the system of employment through jobbers has been condemned by the Tariff Board and it is a fact that that same system has also been condemned by your office?—Yes.

A-3213. You say: "It is of interest to point out here that the mill jobbers recruit *Dhed* boys from neighbouring villages and enter into contracts with their parents to pay them about Rs. 30 per annum and feed, clothe and house the boys in return for their earnings."—That is Ahmedabad.

A-3214. Is there a similar system prevailing here in Bombay?—I have not heard of it.

A-3215. Realizing that the system of employment through jobbers is not satisfactory, and should be condemned, do you not think that that points to the desirability of having labour exchanges through which workers should be recruited for these mills?—I think the most satisfactory labour exchange that could be established would be one within the industry itself, and I should imagine that Government would consider that State interference was not necessary until it had been shown that the industry itself was unable to deal with this problem.

A-3216. You want to limit the sphere of labour exchanges to the industry itself, but do you not think it is a bigger problem than that. There are about 1,00,000 men coming in from outside every year seeking work. Surely the industry alone cannot deal with the problem. Will not the State have to give some assistance and guidance?—That 1,00,000 is not new labour. There is not an influx each year of 1,00,000 people seeking employment in occupations in which they have never been employed before. They may have been on a holiday. They may have a job waiting for them.

A-3217. Still you will agree with me that there is a large influx of new labour coming into Bombay?—I would rather put it that there is a big ebb and flow of labour in and out of Bombay.

A-3218. Would it not be desirable to co-ordinate your activities in regard to the finding of employment for these people, and that it being a problem bigger than can be considered by one industry alone, it is desirable to get the State to lend a helping hand?—It is the mill industry that should be considered. The other ones are relatively subsidiary, so far as this particular aspect of the problem is concerned.

A-3219. Suppose there is surplus labour here, could you not, if you had a scheme like the one I am suggesting to you, be able to place that surplus labour elsewhere outside Bombay?—There would be no guarantee of that.

A-3220. There is no guarantee in regard to any such matters. All I am suggesting is that your information would be valuable to you?—You mean that the State, by an employment agency, would be able to get these unemployed mill hands work elsewhere in the Presidency?

A-3221. *The Chairman*: Do I take it that your fear is that such an institution in Bombay would add to the flow, or the attraction, to Bombay from the country districts and therefore add to the pool of unemployment in Bombay?—That had not occurred to me, but I can quite see that that is a possibility.

A-3222. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In regard to absenteeism you say: "The Tariff Board came to the conclusion, on the basis of the absenteeism statistics supplied by the Labour Office, that Ahmedabad had a great advantage over Bombay in the matter of absenteeism," and you give some figures. You say "The statistics obtained as a result of the wage census of 1926, however, are quite accurate and these show that in Bombay

city absenteeism for all work-people in the textile mills comes to 8·26 per cent. It is 4·35 per cent. in the case of weavers, 7·13 per cent. in the case of all male operatives (including weavers) and 11·86 per cent. in the case of women. In Ahmedabad the percentage of absenteeism amongst all work-people comes to 7·90"—that is as against 7·13 "being 10·76 per cent. for weavers"—as against 4·35—"8·04 per cent. for men (including weavers)"—as against 7·13—and "7·40 per cent. for women." These figures do not bear out the statement made by the Tariff Board. It is just the other way about?—That is so.

A-3223. How do you explain that?—I should explain it by saying that the method by which we obtained our absenteeism figures, as arising out of the wage census, is the most accurate method by which they could be obtained.

A-3224. So that your figures are more correct than the figures of the Tariff Board?—Having regard to the way in which they were obtained, I should accept them representing as accurate a method as could possibly be obtained.

A-3225. If you had some sort of provident fund system do you think that would help the worker to remain more permanently in his avocation than he does at present?—Yes I should say so, especially if it was combined with standardization.

A-3226. Your memorandum deals with contract labour, and you say: "The general effect of the employment of contractors as intermediaries in the manner described above is satisfactory." Have you been to Sukkur?—Not recently.

A-3227. Have you, Mr. Ewbank?—(Mr. Ewbank): Yes, I was Collector at Sukkur.

A-3228. Do you think that this statement is correct when you consider the housing and living conditions of the workers at Sukkur?—You have to compare it with their living conditions in the homes in which they would otherwise be living; but the housing accommodation at Sukkur is not good.

A-3229. I am asking you whether the housing and living and working conditions at Sukkur are satisfactory?—They are certainly of a low standard.

A-3230. Would you agree that some sort of statutory provision in the public contracts should be made for the welfare of these workers—their education, housing, sanitation, etc.,?—Yesterday I was asked to ascertain whether there was any objection to the putting in of a fair wage clause in contracts and that I am doing. The other clause was not put to me.

A-3231. Would you have any objection in regard to that?—I have no objection to ascertaining whether Government would be prepared to put in such a clause.

A-3232. *The Chairman*: It is a question which has been before us on more than one occasion. In the case of public works which are distant from any place where there is available accommodation, would not Government be in favour of the insertion of a clause providing that the housing, medical and sanitary arrangements should be subject to the approval of a medical officer of health for the district? That is what is done in England.—This is a matter for the Public Works Department, and with your permission I will consult them and give an answer later.

A-3233. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: It is stated in the Government memorandum that 97 per cent. of the working classes live in one-room tenements. Is that a correct statement from the figures you have been able to obtain in your office, Mr. Gennings?—Yes.

A-3234. You give figures about infant mortality. I notice that in 1926 the infant mortality per one thousand births registered living in one room and under was 577 and in two rooms 254; and that in 1927 the figures were 419 and 203. Therefore it would appear that a great deal of this mortality is due to overcrowding?—I think that is the general opinion.

A-3235. *The Chairman*: It is suggested to us that these figures are vitiated by the fact that mothers return to their villages for confinement, and therefore the birth is credited to the Presidency; but if the child dies within its first year it probably dies after the mother and child have returned to Bombay, and its death is credited to Bombay?—That is a factor which has to be considered in examining the statistics.

A-3236. I take it that that fact will affect more the first line of these figures, namely, those who live in one-room tenements?—Yes, because they are the migratory people.

A-3237. Has any effort been made to estimate how far these infant mortality figures in Bombay City as compared with other countries have been vitiated by the fact that they return to the villages for confinement?—I think not; I do not think it has been statistically examined. I am not sure whether the Executive Health Officer of the Bombay City examined them.

A-3238. It would not be easy ; it would be a very difficult thing. Would it be possible to estimate how many return to the villages for confinement and see how these figures could be made correct and the necessary deduction made ?—I should think the Executive Health Officer's staff could do that quite well.

A-3239. We do not want Bombay to be painted more black than it is or may be, and it would seem desirable that there should be estimates made as to how far these figures are vitiated by that obvious fact. As I gather, something like one half of the women of this migratory class do in fact return to their villages for confinement.

Mr. Joshi : I cannot understand how these figures could be vitiated by the migratory character of women.

Sir Alexander Murray : It is mentioned in the Government memorandum that " nearly one-third of the infants dying in the city are born outside the city."

The Chairman : That is exactly my point. It lowers the percentage of births in the city and it increases the percentage of deaths.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I want to make one point quite clear. The births that they have registered are births in Bombay City, but the deaths that they have registered are not only of infants that were born in Bombay. How many of these deaths were of infants that were not born in Bombay ?—That has been estimated at one-third, and the figures we give there are the Executive Health Officer's estimate. The Labour Office has no staff to make an inquiry into them ; therefore, we take the figures given by the Executive Health Officer, who has put it as one-third.

The Chairman : It would be a simple thing to say that if that one-third of births had been in Bombay instead of in the village, the percentage instead of being 577 would have been so and so ?—Yes.

Mr. Joshi : Should we not take into consideration the fact that on account of the one-room tenement system, the people have to go back to their villages when they are ill ?

The Chairman : That of course is one of the reasons for the fact that I have tried to elicit.

Mr. Joshi : So, if they remained in Bombay, the number of deaths also would increase.

The Chairman : We all know, it is common knowledge, that the death rate is higher wherever the birth rate is higher. What I am trying to get at is how far the percentage is vitiated by the fact that the women go to the villages for confinement.

Mr. Joshi : That is counterbalanced by the fact that some of the people that leave for the villages die in the villages.

The Chairman : We are speaking of infant deaths.

Diwan Chaman Lall : There may be children born in Bombay, the mothers may take them to the villages and they (the children) may die in the villages. The one fact that does remain, however vitiated the figures may be, is that the deaths in one room tenements are more than the deaths in two-room tenements, if you subtract one-third from the deaths in one-room tenements and one-third from the deaths in two-room tenements.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Only the one-room people go back to their villages.

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola : It might interest Diwan Chaman Lall to know that having regard to the wages paid to these women they cannot live in more than one-room tenements. The two-room tenants are a different class.

Diwan Chaman Lall : That is exactly the point that I am driving at. When they do live in two-room tenements the mortality is less than when they live in one-room tenements.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Those living in two-room tenements do not go home.

Diwan Chaman Lall : That is a statement I am not prepared to accept.

Sir Victor Sassoon : They are not of the same class.

Diwan Chaman Lall : Even if they do not go home, it is an established fact that the mortality in two-room tenements is much less than in one-room tenements.

The Chairman : We may pass this point ; it is common knowledge the world over.

A-3240. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Dr. Sandilands is your Health Officer ?—He has just retired.

A-3241. I think he made a statement—I do not know where—that one in every two-children born in the city of Bombay died within a year of its birth. You will find that

in Mr. Burnett Hurst's book on housing ?—Mr. Burnett Hurst's book would probably be referring to conditions in 1920-21.

A-3242. The book was published in 1925 ; so the reference might be to conditions up to 1924. If you look at the table given in my memorandum you will find that the proportions for 1920-21 are the same as given in his book.

A-3243. *Col. Russell* : Mr. Burnett Hurst used official statistics ?—He used the Executive Health Officer's statement.

A-3244. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : In your memorandum the number of deaths caused by diseases of the respiratory system is given as 559 and by pulmonary tuberculosis 66, out of a total of 1,314. That gives a total of 625. Practically half the number of deaths was caused either by pulmonary tuberculosis or diseases of the respiratory system. Would you put it down to the class of work in which they are employed and the conditions under which they are employed in the mills ?—That is a very wide class. I am not quite sure how it is made up. It is the Factory Inspector's figure.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I may tell you how it is made up. When you applied to the millowners they gave you about a thousand different occupations, and you lumped them all together under the head "Other textiles and millhands, weavers, etc., insufficiently described."

A-3245. Coming to the very important question of the cost of living index, could you tell me what you mean by a rise in the cost of living ? It can be looked at in two different ways. It may be looked at as the rise in the cost of maintaining the same standard of living that they had before, and it may also be looked at as the increase in actual expenditure over the basic period that you take ?—Your first is the one, so far as our index is concerned, and I think, most indices.

A-3246. I find in the Labour Gazette that in preparing your index for clothing you have taken the wholesale price and not the retail price.—Yes ; that is so.

A-3247. Would that not vitiate the final figures that you arrive at ?—No ; it does not ; in fact it makes very little difference.

A-3248. That very little may mean a couple of points.—Yes ; I would say two points.

A-3249. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do not these textile workers get clothing at wholesale prices ?—No ; not all of them.

A-3250. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : As regards prices of milk and firewood, you do not take local retail prices ; you get them from the Director of Agriculture at Pona ?—Yes.

A-3251. Would that not also vitiate the index ?—A very trifling amount.

A-3252. Then, as regards rents, do you reckon your rents from the actuals ?—No. The weight of rent is complicated, it is arrived at from a study of all-India figures.

A-3253. I think you will admit yourself that that would certainly not give a correct estimate of the actuals ?—It is not really in accordance with since ascertained facts.

Diwan Chaman Lall : In regard to the consumption of other articles, you take the total production minus the exports plus the imports. That would not be in accordance with the actuals. You will have to get them done as is done in England in connection with the family budget system.

The Chairman : It is admitted and recognised everywhere that this all-India mass system is quite wrong.

A-3254. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Under the head "Physique" you put down the weight of the spinner at 99 lbs. Are you familiar with the figures given by the Factory Commission in 1907 ? I think they gave 101 lbs. Has there been any deterioration since in the physique of the spinner ?—That I am unable to say. We did not take them ourselves ; it is not our own inquiry ; we ourselves have not made any inquiries on these lines. It is taken from the Report on Humidification.

A-3255. Have you, Mr. Ewbank, any figures regarding the weight of an average prisoner in your jails ? The figure I have is 115.05 lbs. Would I be correct in saying that the average weight of the prisoner is much more than the average weight of the textile worker ?—(Mr. Ewbank) I am not prepared to answer question in the affirmative without verifying your figures.

A-3256. Mr. Cliff questioned you about the average wage. Would I be correct in saying that the average worker in Bombay spends *per capita* not more than three annas for his food, taking a family unit at five (two adults, one grown-up boy and two children) ?—I have not these figures of family budgets at hand.

A-3257. Can a man getting Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, with a family of five in which he is the only bread-winner, afford to spend more than three annas per head?—He in fact spends 75 per cent. of his income on food.

A-3258. Take a man with an income of Rs. 30 with a family of five in which he is the only bread-winner, if he spends three annas per head per day, it will amount to fifteen annas per day. That would probably consume all his income. He is obviously spending less than that on food?—If you put it that way of course, arithmetically it is obvious.

A-3259. Do you consider, from your vast experience in this matter, that fifteen annas per day is sufficient to keep a family of five in well being?—At fifteen annas a day for the family, I would not like to say.

A-3260. Therefore, so far as the minimum wage of Rs. 30 that was suggested before the Fawcett Committee is concerned, would you call it the minimum living wage or the minimum dying wage on this basis?—I do not express any opinion on that.

A-3261. As regards weekly payments, you state in your memorandum that an Act in reference to weekly payments is not demanded by anybody and therefore such an Act "would remain a dead letter in a great number of cases, and be used as an engine for blackmail and false accusations in the remainder". Subsequently you state "Government were unable to agree that penal legislation was necessary in such circumstances, for the practical benefit to the worker in industry generally would be negligible". And yet under the head "Indebtedness" you say: "As regards the causes of indebtedness, it is difficult to generalize. The almost universal system of paying wages monthly means that the workers live on credit all the year round. A man taking up a job for the first time, or after a spell of unemployment or on return from a holiday, if his place has not been kept open for him, may have to wait for as long as six weeks before he draws any pay, for pay-day is usually ten days after the expiry of the month in which the pay was earned. It is easy for such a man to get into debt and be forced to borrow money to cover it. Once he gets into debt high interest charges usually keep him in debt". In one place you say that there is no practical advantage to be derived by the worker, and in another place you say that there would be a practical advantage in that he would get out of the clutches of the money-lender?—We say that the practical benefit to the worker in industry generally would be negligible. The case that you quote is perfectly true. I think we set out the implications arising from a man having to wait six weeks. But that is an unusual case. If a man came to work in a mill at the last week of the month, then he would not have to wait six weeks; he would have to wait only two weeks until the 10th or 11th of the next month. Only if a man comes into a mill on the 1st of the month, then like everybody in Government service, he works for a month without pay and in the mills has to wait till the 10th or 11th of the next month for his pay. In the case of a man like that he has to wait six weeks. It does not apply to all industries, and it depends also on the actual time they take up work in the mill.

A-3262. I am not disputing the actual state of affairs. All that I am saying is, in view of what is admitted by your Government under "Indebtedness," weekly payments would help certain workers?—I quite agree. With regard to weekly payment of wages, it would mean a complete reversal of the whole manner in which a worker lives. Therefore, it has to be considered on that basis.

A-3263. *Mr. Ahmed*: Yesterday, in answering certain questions of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you (Mr. Ewbank) stated that owing to the financial difficulty you could not extend education and you also stated that Government have not encouraged industrial education. You have been connected with the Government of India and you are now connected with the Government of Bombay. I want you to tell me what is your solution of the financial difficulty?—(Mr. Ewbank) So far as we are concerned, we find that the cost per head of educating a boy in Bombay Presidency is higher than in any other presidency or province in India and we are going into that matter. We are not sure that the change to administration by local bodies has not during the transfer given rise to a certain amount of expenditure for which we are not getting full value, and we are going into that point. We hope to be able to reduce the cost of education by administrative measures, and at the same time year by year we hope to be able slowly to devote more and more money from the general revenues to education, and as that happens the number of primary schools will increase and the areas under compulsory education will necessarily be multiplied.

A-3264. That answer does not satisfy me. I want full scope of education to be given to the industrial worker?—As you know, the industrial population of India amounts to 1 per cent. of the population of all India, and I suppose on a rough estimate our industrial population amounts to 2½ per cent. of the population of the Presidency of Bombay. We have to consider these percentages when allocating the distribution of money for educational schemes.

A-3265. As regards industrial education, would you get the cost of that from the employers?—There is no proposal before Government for taxing the employers directly for providing education to the children of their employees. The employers contribute to the funds of the local authorities and both the local authority and Government share the expenditure on primary education.

A-3266. I am not speaking of primary education in all municipal and local board areas. I am confining my question to industrial areas. Should the cost of educating the children of industrial workers in industrial areas be contributed by the employers, or should it be borne by Government?—On that point, it depends on the report of your Commission. At present the employers contribute through the rates. Through the rates charged on their factories as on all other buildings, the employers contribute largely to the cost of education.

A-3267. There was also a suggestion for the enactment of an Employers' Liability Act. Would your Government be in favour of legislation of that type?—Yesterday, I promised to obtain the views of Government on the question of the adoption of an Employers' Liability Act, and I repeat that I will do so.

A-3268. Are you in favour of taxing the employers directly for the cost of education of the children of the labourers? I want the whole responsibility for that education to be borne by the employers?—I am certainly not in a position to say that Government are in favour of levying a differential rate on employers of labour for the education of their employees. At present, as I say, they are paying partly through the rates and partly through the local fund cess. We are awaiting the report of this Commission. There is no proposal before Government to alter the present system.

A-3269. Are you in favour of the employers paying that cost, if they undertake it?—If the employers were to volunteer to undertake the burden, it would certainly benefit education.

A-3270. I suppose your answer will be just the same as regards sanitation and health—that the employers should undertake to pay the cost of sanitation and health with regard to their workmen?—I just stated that Government are not prepared to take that view.

A-3271. In answer to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you stated that you promised to pay 50 per cent. of the cost of primary education to local bodies and you were bound to pay it. Why do you not pay that?—We do pay.

A-3272. But you said that you did not pay in some places?—The point is we do not sanction the new schemes because we have not got the money for it; where a scheme is sanctioned Government pay 50 per cent. or two-thirds as the case may be.

A-3273. As regards housing accommodation for workers, you say that there is not sufficient accommodation maintained by the employers in the mills. Do you think the employers should be compelled by law to supply housing for workers?—(Mr. Gennings) So far as Bombay is concerned, of course the employers contributed directly to the industrial housing scheme by paying a cess on cotton coming into Bombay. So, they actually did contribute directly to the industrial housing scheme.

A-3274. In spite of that there is insufficiency of accommodation?—No; I do not admit that. There is a very large number of rooms available in the Worli *chawls* which were built by Government partly out of the proceeds of the cotton cess.

A-3275. Are you aware that a number of workers for want of accommodation live outside?—I am not aware of that. There may be reasons for it, but that is not due to the fact that they cannot get a room to live in elsewhere.

A-3276. Are you quite sure that there is sufficient accommodation available?—Definitely there are 10,000 rooms empty awaiting tenants.

A-3277. In spite of that people are living outside those *chawls*?—Yes; that is so.

A-3278. Is it because they get accommodation cheaper outside?—Not always because they get it cheaper, because they live with their friends and live in their own locality.

A-3279. You were asked yesterday about the causes of the trade depression, and you said that it was owing to the strike?—(Mr. Ewbank) No. The answer was that no special enquiries had been made into the causes of the depression in the cotton trade. Government have not made any special enquiry since the Noyce Report.

A-3280. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum you deal with "deaths by causes and occupations in Bombay city in 1927". In the cotton textile industry there were 174,000 workers and dependents according to the census of 1921. Out of the total deaths in that population none of them is attributed to suicide and four are attributed

to pulmonary tuberculosis. That seems to be a small figure. Is it also the case that as far as the whole of Bombay is concerned, out of 27,000 deaths last year there were only 1,700 due to tuberculosis?—I have not the figures here and I am prepared to take it from you that that is so.

A-3281. With regard to the question of unemployment it was suggested by one of the witnesses that it would be advisable to set up an employment agency to deal with the question of unemployment in Bombay. But in chapter I of your memorandum you say that the percentage of persons born in Bombay to the total population in 1921 for instance was so low as 16 per cent., showing thereby that the remaining 84 per cent. of the people then in Bombay were born outside Bombay. Further every day there are thousands of persons migrating into Bombay in search of employment. Would not these circumstances make it very difficult to set up an agency for these thousands of migrants in Bombay?—I do not think the figures can be accepted without qualification. We have stated in the memorandum that workers normally resident in Bombay send their wives to their native places for confinement. Further those figures were given in connection with the question of infant mortality. But now we are dealing with the question of the population of Bombay.

A-3282. But the number of persons actually born in Bombay still remains the same?—It is stated quite clearly that the woman generally likes to get away to her own mother in the village rather than remain in Bombay for her confinement. And the increase of transport facilities has rather accelerated than diminished that tendency.

A-3283. But would not these factors mentioned by me make the task of dealing with unemployment in Bombay difficult?—Yes.

A-3284. Is it possible for the Provincial Legislature to initiate legislation dealing with welfare of labour or trade disputes or things of that description?—(Mr. Ewbank) Under the constitution under which we are working there are certain industrial matters on which we are subject to legislation by the Central Government. And one or two industrial matters on which we are free to legislate, you will find them in part II of the schedule to the Devolution Rules.

A-3285. *Mr. Clow*: You can legislate on all labour matters.—Yes, but subject to the control of the Central Government.

A-3286. *The Chairman*: The position is that the Provincial Government can legislate on all labour matters subject to the previous sanction of the Governor General?—And subject of course to legislation already existing which has been passed by the Central Government.

A-3287. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The position is that subject to the previous sanction of the Governor General you can initiate legislation in connection with welfare of labour and matters of that description. Is that not so?—Yes, subject to the qualifications I have mentioned.

A-3288. Then has the Governor General refused his sanction in any case or prevented you in any manner from proceeding with any legislation dealing with labour matters that you have contemplated?—I do know of such cases.

A-3289. Can you tell us what they are?—I am not sure I would be in order in telling you of those cases. I have the information and I shall take orders of Government on that point. You refer to all matters coming under the head of labour legislation?

A-3290. Yes. I understand you have concurrent powers in the matter of introducing legislation. Is there any special advantage in having such legislation initiated in the Provincial Legislature or in the Central Legislature?—That would depend rather on the circumstances and the nature of the legislation contemplated. For instance, we have recently passed the Bombay Maternity Benefits Bill. As far as I know, no difficulty is anticipated in administering it as a piece of provincial legislation. On the other hand I can quite conceive of an Act like the Trade Unions Act which should certainly be an All-India Act, because its general principles are applicable to the whole of India.

A-3291. In your memorandum you refer to the setting up of "conciliation machinery within an industry itself set up by the parties concerned but validated if necessary by legislation". Is that legislation to be by the Provincial Legislature or the Central Legislature?—The Trade Disputes Act which provides the ultimate machinery in these trade disputes is of all-India application. Apparently it would be reasonable to suppose that legislation validating the conciliation machinery should also be *prima facie* of all-India application. But I am not empowered to express the views of Government on that matter.

A-3292. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: But was there any case in which the Provincial Government wanted to introduce legislation in these matters and the Government of

India said that they themselves contemplated introducing an all-India legislation and wanted them not to proceed with provincial legislation?—(Mr. Gennings) What happened was this. When the Trade Disputes Bill came up the Government of Bombay expressed the opinion that before they had a Trade Disputes Act there should be some Act providing conciliation machinery. But for reasons which we do not know the Government of India were not able to agree to that, and the Trade Disputes Act went through without the preliminary conciliation machinery.

A-3293. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What have you to say as a result of your experience of the working of the Act in the meantime?—The Government's view is that once the Trade Disputes Act has been put on the statute book, then it would not be right for a local legislature to legislate for an intervening machinery. It would be better if legislation setting up conciliation machinery applicable to the whole of India is made to precede the Trade Disputes Act.

A-3294. Did the Government of Bombay want to have a Trade Disputes Bill some years ago?—Yes.

A-3295. And they did not go on with that in deference to the wishes of the Government of India?—That is so.

A-3296. The Government of India passed a Trade Disputes Act. Therefore you think that the responsibility no longer rests with the local Government to initiate and put through any legislation concerning directly or indirectly trade disputes and conciliation machinery?—(Mr. Ewbank) We need not go so far as that. *Prima facie* it would be more consistent if the legislation continued to be done by the Central Government. But if the Central Government is unwilling to undertake legislation on those lines the local Government will consider the position.

A-3297. I shall leave that point. Now the Central Government can pass legislation dealing with welfare of labour and that may make it necessary for the local Government to find the necessary funds to finance the welfare schemes. What is your opinion with regard to this aspect of the relation between the Central and Provincial Governments on the question of welfare of labour? Would you prefer that legislation should be introduced by the Government of India or by the local Government?—The Local Government has expressed its opinion that it is not altogether reasonable while the income tax and the revenue derived from industrial undertakings go to the Government of India, that the functions of development, control and assistance to industry should be left to the local Government.

A-3298. Therefore unless the law is changed do the Bombay Government propose not to do anything in the matter of the welfare of labour?—That is not the position. The Bombay Government will do what it can according to its own resources, but the resources are limited.

Mr. Cliff: They have defined their position very clearly in their memorandum further on and they conclude: "It is imperative that no further obligation of this character should be assumed until either fresh sources of revenue can be made available or the Central Government undertakes to bear the expenditure".

A-3299. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is that still the attitude of the Government of Bombay?—Yes. The financial position is worse this year than it was last year. We think that in our present position it is imperative what we should not have further burdens put upon us.

A-3300. Therefore any amount of recommendations by this or any other Commission will not be of use, because under the present financial conditions the Government of Bombay will not be able to do anything?—Not under the present financial conditions, certainly. But we hope we are getting near the end of our financial stringency. If trade revives our revenues will rise.

A-3301. But do you think that trade will revive soon?—I hope so.

A-3302. Under the present constitutional relations between the Central and Provincial Governments in the matter of labour welfare legislation, as we understand it, is it possible for the Central Government to pass legislation imposing certain burdens on the Provincial Government and yet refuse to assist you to carry on the welfare work? Have you considered that aspect of the question?—They can certainly pass legislation imposing burdens on us in the matter of trade and labour. But whether they can give us a grant or not, I am not sure. That is a debatable point. I am inclined to think that it might be possible. Just as in the matter of agriculture which is a transferred subject, the Government of India have given a very large sum for founding the Central Agricultural Research Council, they might by some similar device be able to come to the help of Provincial Governments.

A-3303. Take the question of statistics. The Economic Enquiry Committee has recommended that every province should have a statistical department. What are your views on the point?—(Mr. Gennings) My own personal view is that it would be a very sound idea.

A-3304. I understand that some years ago a bill was introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council dealing with statistics, but was abandoned by the Local Government later on. Why was that abandoned by the Local Government?—That was a bill providing for the compulsory collection of statistics.

A-3305. But unless you resorted to compulsion how could you get reliable statistics?—In Bombay we have been able to collect a fair amount of reliable statistics without any compulsion.

A-3306. So that you are in favour of collecting statistics voluntarily and not compulsorily?—I can say this from my experience as head of the statistical department here. In the early stages till the people get accustomed to supplying statistics and until the area one has to cover is very much broadened, it is possible to collect good statistics without compulsion. But if you want more detailed statistics, or statistics which go to business secrets or trade matters of that sort, then you might want to have compulsion. But so far as the organized industries in Bombay are concerned, speaking for myself, I have had no difficulty in getting any information I wanted.

A-3307. "Statistics" is a central subject still, is it not?—Yes.

A-3308. Can you give me an idea of what statistics ought to be gathered by the Central Government and what by the Provincial Government?—I think it was the Economic Enquiry Committee that subdivided it in that way. Of course the primary function of the Central Bureau will be to collate and tabulate the statistics received from all the provincial bureaux.

A-3309. Is the collection of statistics a provincial subject?—I do not understand the question. The subject of statistics is definitely one for administration by the local Government.

Sir Victor Sassoon: "Statistics" in the main is a central subject, but the "Collection of Statistics" is a provincial subject.

A-3310. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Can the Central Government dictate what kind of collection they want the Provincial Government to make?

The Chairman: They could, but they are reluctant to do so because the expenditure is to be borne by the Provincial Government.

A-3311. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the collection of statistics have you made any endeavour to ascertain what is a living wage in Bombay?—(Mr. Gennings) No, we have not.

A-3312. Therefore in fixing wages do they practically apply the ordinary law of supply and demand?—That is how it has been applied heretofore in India.

A-3313. The Indian Economic Enquiry Committee have made a reference to the subsistence level of the workers. Have you ever made any attempt to ascertain what that is?—No.

A-3314. Do you know of any other country that has ascertained what the subsistence level should be?—I do not know of any other country that has done that officially, except perhaps Russia. But I may be entirely wrong.

A-3315. The Economic Enquiry Committee suggested that the minimum subsistence level in India might be ascertained by taking into account the three standards officially fixed, i.e., the jail diet, the hospital diet and the Famine Code rations. Can you express any opinion as to the suitability of the average of these three standards being taken as the subsistence level in India?—I should not express an opinion. I have not studied the subject.

A-3316. Dealing with the question of workmen's compensation, we discussed yesterday the question of recurring payment of compensation instead of lump sum payment. It is stated that the average length of life in India is 25 years as against 50 in England. Would not this fact influence considerably the question of recurring payments of compensation?—It would all depend on what is the anticipation of life at the period when a person becomes entitled to the benefit. I do not know what actuarial estimates have been worked out for the expectation of life of a woman aged 25. The expectation of life of a child one month old may be 25 years. That is perfectly true. But I do not know what has been worked out as the expectation of life of a woman aged 25; it may be 50 or 60.

A-3317. All the same will not that factor affect your payment of compensation?—We were talking about those figures in connection with the question of infantile mortality. I was simply drawing attention to the fact that the expectation of life at 25 would be much more than at birth. For instance, a child born in England might have an expectation of life up to 50 or 60, whereas a child born in India might have a expectation of life up to 25 years only. But we have no comparative figures showing how long an English worker of 25 and an Indian worker of 25 are expected to live. I do not know whether the same relation that exists between the expectations of life at birth in the two cases exists between the expectations of life at a particular age. Whatever it is, the expectation of life is an important factor which has to be taken into consideration in connection with recurring payments of compensation.

A-3318. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Yesterday in reply to Mr. Cliff, I think it was, you said that Government was not prepared to advocate legislation so that mediation rules similar to those recommended by the Fawcett Committee might be compulsorily applied to all industries. How do you reconcile that with the statement made in your memorandum "that the gap should be filled by the establishment of conciliation machinery within an industry itself set up by the parties concerned but validated if necessary by legislation"?—(Mr. Gennings). I do not think I said that. (Mr. Ewbank). Yesterday on the question of mediation rules I undertook to refer to Government the possibility of adopting some system corresponding to the Industrial Relationship Committee in England.

A-3319. Even there if there is to be legislation, there should be a permanent body composed of representatives of the employers and workmen in a particular industry. Is it not necessary that the representatives of the employees should be fully representative of the industry?—Yes.

A-3320. If a trade union had only a minority of workers as its members, would you consider that as representative of the workers in that industry?—No, it must be able to answer for the bulk of the workers.

A-3321. Now I come to the question of monthly payment of wages. Is it in your knowledge that the workers in the textile industry in Bombay have by their action in the past shown a desire to remain on the system of monthly payments?—(Mr. Gennings). Yes, that is so.

A-3322. Have they shown any desire to have weekly payments?—No.

A-3323. And this question of weekly or monthly payments has never been an issue in any of the disputes in the mill industry?—No.

A-3324. With regard to the question of delayed payment of wages, do you consider that it would be feasible to pay the monthly wages on the first of the next month?—No it would not be feasible.

A-3325. Should there not be some period for making calculations of wages due for workers doing piece-work?—Yes.

A-3326. If you were to legislate on this matter would 7 or 8 days be a reasonable time for making these calculations?—I think it would be.

A-3327. Could it not be less?—It cannot be less in the weaving shed or anywhere where piece-work is carried on.

A-3328. Therefore what is the difference between the state of things now and what foreshadowed by you? A new workman might be able to get his wages 3 or 4 days earlier than he actually gets it to-day when he has to wait for 10 to 14 days.—I think legislative dealing with prompt payment of wages might provide that the time-workers might be paid several days earlier than that. But when you are going to legislate you must make provision for exceptional cases also.

A-3329. Do you agree that as long as wages are paid more or less at the same time every month, the difference of prompt payment or delayed payment only affects the workmen in the first period of his engagement. Or in other words he is going to get payments every month after the first six weeks of his engagement. Only in the first instance he has to wait for six weeks; subsequently he gets payment at intervals of one month each.—Yes, that is so.

A-3330. So the delay only affects him in the first place—the period of first engagement?—Yes, that is when he has to wait the longest time.

A-3331. *Mr. Clow*: So long as he remains under that employer?—Yes. If he takes up three or four different jobs in the course of a year, then the difficulty arises with regard to each job when he takes pay.

A-3332. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Let us assume that he leaves on the last day of the month and goes to another employer. Would he not receive his previous month's wages that month?—Yes.

A-3333. Therefore it would not make any difference?—Take the case of a man leaving after pay day. He would have then put in a fortnight's service. But he would have to wait for a month to get wages for that fortnight.

A-3334. If he left on the 15th he would receive his new wages on the 15th of the following month and also he would receive the wages for the fortnight which he has already earned in the previous employment; that is, he would be collecting wages of two fortnights in two different places?—Yes.

A-3335. Do you think that he would have to pay a higher charge to his *bania* if he were to make him wait for an extra ten or fourteen days for payment in the first instance?—I do not know what the *banias* do here.

A-3336. With regard to the employment agency, if a number of mills in Bombay cease to work, the existence or not of an employment agency will not help those men who are unemployed if there was no demand for labour?—It would not help those men unless, of course, your organization extended up-country and you could send them up-country and they were willing to go there.

A-3337. Supposing there was a demand for labour at Sholapur, would those men be prepared to go to Sholapur?—*I think a good many of them would go to Sholapur because it is in their own country.*

A-3338. Would they go to Madras or Cawnpore?—*I think that is unlikely.*

A-3339. I take it, therefore, that there is use for an employment agency only where you have a demand for labour on one side and a supply on the other. It may be said that a permanent employment agency will not be of much use if one mill closes down to-day and another re-opens to-morrow?—*I think the function of an employment agency is to regulate labour and to ensure that no job that is open remains unfilled.*

A-3340. From your experience, when a labourer leaves one mill, is he prepared to go to the other side of the city, to live in another district?—*I have got no definite information on that point and therefore I could not express an opinion.*

A-3341. If, as is said by some, there is likely to be a tendency, owing to the high cost of production, on the part of employers to remove mills to other parts of India, not necessarily within the presidency, would that be a matter of concern to the Government of Bombay?—*Yes, I think it would be.*

A-3342. They would not like to see the industry closing down here even if it were to increase the production of textiles say, in the province of Madras?—*No; that may be accepted.*

A-3343. Have they considered what steps they might take to prevent such an occurrence taking place?—*(Mr. Ewbank)* : Since the Noyce Committee reported, I am not aware that the Local Government have made any specific enquiry on that subject.

A-3344. That is not my point. Let me give you a concrete case. One of my fellow millowners came to us and asked for technical advice as to the possibility of removing one of his mills from Bombay to up-country, and from the figures that we worked out it was a very feasible possibility. I am not asking whether the Government of Bombay have made any inquiry, but I am asking whether they would consider what steps should be taken to prevent such an eventuality.—*(Mr. Ewbank)* : The prosperity of the cotton

industry in the whole of the Bombay Presidency is a matter of vital concern to the Local Government, but whether, as economic conditions alter, it is desirable that the mills should be located up-country or in Bombay is not a matter which has recently been considered by Government, and the suggestion that measures should be taken to prevent mills moving up-country is not one that has been considered by Government

A-3345. I earnestly wish that it should be considered?—*The proposal that measures could be taken to discourage the transfer of mills from Bombay city to up-country?*

Sir Victor Sassoon : Not necessarily. You might prevent mills finding it necessary to go up-country so as to contribute to the prosperity of the province.....

—*Diwan Chaman Lall* : By offering inducements to stay on?

A-3346. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Yes. If the Government of Bombay considers that for the vital prosperity of the province the mill industry should remain in the province, will they consider what steps should be taken, if it is found that mills are finding it impossible to continue in Bombay city and are therefore transferring the mills up-country?—*The*

view of the Government of Bombay would be that the Noyce Committee have recommended very definite measures that shall be taken by the millowners themselves for the organization of the industry. When they see those measures being taken, the Bombay Government would consider the matter that you mention.

A-3347. No doubt it will be in your memory that there has been a serious attempt to carry out those recommendations but it has not been found practicable at the moment?—In certain respects, yes.

A-3348. *Mr. Cliff*: It would probably be present in the minds of the Government that even though the mills were out of Bombay they could still be in the Presidency, and there might be circumstances where that would be desirable?—Exactly; the Government is concerned with the prosperity of the industry in this presidency. I might say that Government are considering at the present moment a proposal to prevent diversion of trade from Bombay and that proposal does, in fact, also include measures which affect the mills.

A-3349. Is that for the whole of the Presidency?—No, for the Bombay city.

The Chairman: Since Mr. Gilligan, Collector of Ratnagiri, is unable to appear before us to give evidence, I propose to put to you one or two questions which I had intended to put to Mr. Gilligan, and I think they do come within your province, Mr. Gennings, because I understand that we are indebted to you to a large extent for these extremely interesting little life histories of workers who come from Ratnagiri district into Bombay?—(Mr. Gennings): They were got from our Lady Investigators particularly Mrs. Wagh.

A-3350. May I congratulate you on your Lady Investigator?—These little life histories, I think, do give a better picture than anything else I have yet seen of what the real facts are with regard to migratory labour particularly in the case of the city of Bombay, and they are well worth studying by persons—employers and others—who are interested in the human history of these workers in the factories of Bombay. They are really excellent little human documents. I would like, if I might, to ask you how these samples were taken. I think they were taken in Ratnagiri because they are accompanied by an excellent note from Mr. Gilligan who was then Collector in Ratnagiri?—They were taken in Bombay. We communicated with Mr. Gilligan who put up a note, based upon the experience of his district officers, of the people as they come back to the country from the towns and their life there before they go. My recollection is that there are two notes: one deals with the life histories of the workers, collected by our Lady Investigators in Bombay in the *chawls* by talking to these people, and the other note deals with what was ascertained from the district officers down in Ratnagiri.

A-3351. That leads me to ask this further question. Is there no system as between Ratnagiri and Bombay, taking Ratnagiri as the place from which the largest main stream of migrants comes of keeping count of the migrants, say, something like 100,000 persons in the course of the year—I do not mean 100,000 new comers, but 100,000 new workers and workers returning to industry in Bombay? Is there no system of registration in Ratnagiri of those workers living in Bombay who come from Ratnagiri?—No.

A-3352. There is no record of the state of health, or economics or morals of the people who return after a sojourn in Bombay?—No.

A-3353. There is no record available to us then from the village point of view of the effect of industrial life on this great stream of workers?—There is no information.

A-3354. We are left to form our conclusions from such human documents as you have supplied to us?—Yes.

A-3355. Do you think that any system of registration would be practicable both in the part of the province from which they come as well as after they are engaged for labour here in Bombay?—I think it is very doubtful whether that would be possible.

A-3356. They just come and go as they please on the advice of their friends?—Yes. They come to friends in Bombay and they hear about what is happening in Bombay from the people who come back to their village every year.

A-3357. And that is the only information on which they act?—That is so.

A-3358. There is no such thing as an information officer in the district from which they come, who can tell them where they would best obtain employment?—No, nothing of that sort.

A-3359. And they come to Bombay and form a surplus pool of labour in Bombay, not all of them ever finding employment at the same time?—Quite a good proportion will come up because they know that their friends or their relatives can get them a job in a particular mill where they are employed.

A-3360. Can you tell me, is there anything in Ratnagiri in the nature of a co-operative credit society?—(Mr. Ewbank): Yes; we have large numbers.

A-3361. Are these migrant workers when they are in their own homes members of these societies?—Not, of course, always, but frequently they are members in societies in their villages and also in societies started in connection with the mills or institutions like the Servants of India.

A-3362. Is it not possible to have a link between the village co-operative society and the provident society within the industry so that these people do not get into the hands of the money-lender and can go back at the end of their work in funds instead of in debt? Has that problem ever been thought out?—I cannot speak of the last few years in regard to co-operative societies but previous to that the village co-operative societies had not yet reached, as a rule, a state of efficiency which would enable them to co-operate in that matter. Theoretically, it is perfectly a feasible proposition, and I think that as the co-operative societies improve in general knowledge of the technique of co-operative credit and as they get better secretaries, it would be possible to arrange something on those lines.

A-3363. Supposing you had in every substantial industry in Bombay a labour officer whose duty was to care for the personnel of this large labour force, would it not be possible for him to be in contact with the village co-operative society where these people come from and to link them up with the provident society within the works so that throughout their time of working in Bombay they would be saved the necessity of going either to the *bania* or to the money-lender and the whole of their earnings might go to their advantage and to that of their family?—I think that something on those lines is quite feasible, but we have to remember that the village co-operative society is based on unlimited liability which entails that every member has to keep an eye on how the other members are getting on.

A-3364. I am not suggesting that this should throw any additional liability on the village society; far from it; on the other hand it would work the other way round?—When he borrows from Bombay for the purpose of marriages, ceremonies and such other things in Bombay, then that debit, I take it, should be transferred to the village when he goes back.

A-3365. What I am asking you is whether any practical thought has been given to this because it seems to me a particularly favourable field where you have one large stream coming to one definite place, and these little human documents, more than anything I have ever read, show the need and the possibility for just the human guidance and connection that will make all the difference in these people throughout their industrial life?—I think that is a very valuable suggestion, if I may say so, and I will communicate it to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies at once. Of course it is a question always of debts and bankruptcy; a man who starts off with a burden of debt hanging round his neck is very often a man to whom you cannot give any advance.

A-3366. For instance, we are told by a man here that he is heavily indebted. He tells us he has Rs. 80 debt but on that he is paying 75 per cent. interest; so he cannot reduce his debt and yet he is paying interest practically equal to the principal. It does seem that a man like that cannot be relieved altogether of that burden. I do not think we can pursue that question at the moment. I want to ask you one more question about Ratnagiri. It is stated by some one that there is something in the nature of forced labour due to a certain land system which I do not myself quite understand?—(Mr. Gennings): You mean the *khoti* system?

A-3367. Yes. Can you tell the Commission what that system is?—(Mr. Ewbank): I cannot give you exact information, but one of the conditions of the tenure of the land is that the tenant performs certain services for the *khoti*. We have some evidence that some of the tenants prefer this system of paying their rents partly by service to paying cash rents, but we are not in a position, of course, to say generally that that system would be preferred if they had the alternative. If you would like to know the exact facts, under the law, regarding the *khoti* tenure and what it entails, I could obtain it for the Commission.

A-3368. I should like to know that. Mr. Gennings, I am asked whether it would be possible for you to give us any figures showing the ebb and flow of traffic between Bombay and Ratnagiri. I understand that they all come by boat, and possibly some traffic returns might show the ebb and flow of this migrant labour?—(Mr. Gennings): I think the steamer companies could probably give us the monthly figures of outward traffic to Ratnagiri and the inward traffic from Ratnagiri to Bombay. I do not know, but I should imagine that those figures would be available.

A-3369. Perhaps the figures for the last two or three years may be vitiated due to the strikes, but you can give us the figures for the last five years and we will make our own adjustments.—A certain number of them come by country craft and a certain number by railway; of course, I quite agree that a great bulk of them come by boat.

A-3370. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You can, I take it, get the figures from the railway?—Yes, but not in respect of country craft.

A-3371. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Let us have a statement with regard to firing on the strikers. I want to know what action the Government take in regard to this matter, because in the last strike there was a great deal of agitation which was prolonged and bitter because this was one of the reasons. Did they hold an inquiry afterwards?—(Mr. Ewbank): An inquiry was held under the chairmanship of the Judicial Commissioner in Sind, called the Riots Enquiry Committee. You have the report, I think, before you.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Yes. If I am not mistaken there are three or four occasions during the last ten years on which firing took place. I think you had one about the 26th of January 1920 and one in 1928.

A-3372. *The Chairman*: Do the Government of Bombay publish a communique or statement on this question?—On the 1928 case we published a report, but I have no knowledge whether we published on the earlier cases.

A-3373. I do not think we can go further than 1928. What was the nature of the report you published?—The report drawn up under the presidency of the Judicial Commissioner in Sind.

A-3374. That is the one we have already with us?—Yes, the report of the Riots Inquiry Committee which deals with the riot of 1928-29. (Mr. Gennings): I think what Mr. Chaman Lall wants is if in the course of a strike there are disturbances and the police open fire, whether, as a matter of course, a departmental or other enquiry is held and the facts with regard to it published. I do not think that is so. The only thing is that there might be question asked in the Legislative Council to which the Home Member might have replied. But no inquiry is set up whenever firing is resorted to by the police.

The Chairman: Because it is the normal duty of the police to provide for public safety.

Diwan Chaman Lall: It will be helpful if it is shown whether in every textile strike during the last nine years this action was taken, or at least the number of occasions on which this was done during that period.

The Chairman: I do not see the relevancy. How are you going to decide what is a strike and what is not?

Diwan Chaman Lall: For instance, we can consider if it is advisable to suggest that a judicial inquiry should be instituted in all cases where a strike takes place and the police resort to firing. At present the impression on the mind of the strikers is that firing is done gratuitously and that means prolongation of the strike.

The Witness (Mr. Ewbank): If it would meet with Mr. Chaman Lall's wishes, I have here the speeches of the Honourable the Home Member in introducing the Bill for making intimidation cognizable and the Presidency Security Bill, the two Bills which were introduced last July to deal with troubles which arose last May. Those are the latest statements on this matter. I now put them in before the Commission.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

TWENTY-THIRD MEETING

BOMBAY

Saturday, 23rd November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
 Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
 Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
 DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,
 I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. A. HOOSEINBOHY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
 Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C.

Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. } *Lady Assessors.*
 Mrs. K. WAGH.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. } *Joint Secretaries.*
 Mr. A. DIBDIN.

**Mr. H. M. ROBOTOM, Acting Shipping Master, Bombay, and
 Mr. R. R. SONALKER, Recruiting Officer.**

A-3375. *The Chairman* : Mr. Robotom, how long have you held your present office ?—(Mr. Robotom) I was Deputy Shipping Master for eleven and a half years and I have been acting as Shipping Master for about two and a half months.

A-3376. We had evidence in Delhi from the Central Government with regard to the question of recruiting seamen and we were there informed that it is a Central Government question. Will you put before the Commission in a few words what your duties are in relation to the Central Government and to Bombay in particular ?—Since April we have come under the Government of India ; before that we were under the Government of Bombay. Before April all correspondence and orders used to come to us through the local Government ; now they come direct from the Central Government in the Department of Commerce.

A-3377. It is since that change was made that the Government decided to appoint a special recruiting officer ?—The subject was under consideration of the Central Government, and it was also under the consideration of the Bombay Government before that.

A-3378. The actual appointment was made by the Central Government ?—Yes.

A-3379. Can you tell the Commission from your experience of the last five months how, in your opinion, the new method has worked—since the appointment of the special recruiting officer ?—I think it has tended to make the men more satisfied. They are put up for selection in their turn and none of them need be absent at the selection. When there is a selection of *serangs* and butlers, the recruiting officer sees that all the men available are put up for selection. I think that satisfies them. Every man gets a chance for selection.

A-3380. As far as your experience goes, you think that it has been an improvement on the system that prevailed before ?—Yes ; it is an improvement to that extent, that it satisfies the men that they get an equal chance of selection.

A-3381. As between the two alternative systems of recruitment in practice—direct recruitment by companies and recruitment through the recruiting officer—which is preferable ?—I think direct recruitment by companies is preferable. The Peninsular

and Oriental and British India Steam Navigation Companies do their own recruiting and I think they are satisfied with it. It is a satisfactory way of recruiting seamen to have it done directly by the companies.

A-3382. For that reason you think that the method of direct recruitment is better?—Yes, because there is nobody to go between them; it is an actual transaction between the employers and the employed and there is no go-between.

A-3383. There is no broker between the sailor and his employer?—Yes.

A-3384. And your experience is that that system of recruitment has worked satisfactorily and if the other companies adopt it, it would be satisfactory both to the companies and to the men?—Yes; I believe so.

A-3385. *Mr. Clow*: You do not suggest, I take it, that direct recruitment by the companies of the men necessarily eliminates the possibility of bribery at some stage?—I cannot say it does eliminate it altogether. It does to the extent that there is no middleman in the matter.

A-3386. I suppose there is a runner or somebody?—Somebody has to be employed to get the seamen together.

A-3387. How far does this rotation system apply? Does it apply both to the companies that recruit direct and the companies that recruit through the recruiting officer?—The companies that recruit direct do what they like; I believe they go by rotation as much as practicable.

A-3388. The companies that go through the recruiting office have got to follow the rotation system?—We recommend it to them but they claim to select men according to their own wants.

A-3389. Is the rotation system applied strictly for instance, suppose a *serang* has been at sea for a year and the chief officer is satisfied with him, can the chief officer keep him on?—Yes.

A-3390. He is not compelled by the Union or any other authority to get rid of him and bring out fresh men?—No.

A-3391. Some of the memoranda submitted to us suggest to my mind that one effect of the rotation system is merely one of substituting under-employment for unemployment?—The rotation system would merely distribute the work more equally; it would not increase the work.

A-3392. Do you not think that it has the effect of keeping in this branch of industry a large number of men who are unnecessary; the average man gets too little employment and there are too many men waiting for the rotation?—The present system is just to take the men they want without rotation; we recommend rotation but they claim to select the men as they want.

A-3393. But in actual practice I understand in many cases there are definite instructions, particularly as regards saloon stewards, for example, by which a man gets employed about a year and then has to go out of work and wait for more than a year before his turn comes?—The Peninsular and Oriental Co., I believe, try to give all their men a chance in that way. After a certain time, a year I think, they bring the men out and put other men in their places so as to give them all a chance of employment.

A-3394. Do you not think it would be better to restrict the number of men? The effect of the present system is to keep in the shipping industry a large number of men than are really required to maintain the industry?—The supply of the men is voluntary; they come forward themselves.

A-3395. My point is this—the rotational system which the unions prefer, which distributes the work among the men, has the effect of keeping too many men and giving them too little work, and it would be better if the number of men were restricted?—If the number of men were less there would be more work for them.

A-3396. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What *Mr. Clow* says is, it would be better to have a smaller number of men fairly constantly employed rather than have a larger number of men who are only partially employed as under the rotation system?—Yes, it would be better for the men who are employed; but it would not be better for the men who are put out of employment.

A-3397. *Mr. Clow*: Would it not be better if they went and looked for other sorts of employment?—Yes. If there were less men there would be more employment for them.

A-3398. Would not that be an improvement?—Yes; it would lessen the men from whom to select, but there would perhaps be a time when the number of men would not be sufficient.

A-3399. I am not suggesting going to that stage. At present the number of men is much greater than is sufficient to keep an ample margin ?—Yes.

A-3400. In the long time you have been in Bombay, do you consider that the evil of bribery has diminished or increased ?—I think it is tending to diminish.

A-3401. Is the number of men unemployed diminishing or increasing within the last six years ?—That depends on the state of the trade. Just now there is rather a large number of unemployed, but the number is not unusually large.

A-3402. Comparing the present time with 1922-23, would you say that the number of unemployed is greater than what it was ?—I daresay it is.

A-3403. Unless other measures were taken, that would tend to increase bribery ; do you not think so ? After all bribery depends to some extent on the number of men who are unable to obtain employment ?—It would perhaps be so.

A-3404. Is the system of workmen's compensation working satisfactorily ?—Yes.

A-3405. Do all the companies pay compensation under the system ?—Yes ; they do. The seaman, in case he is not satisfied, can appeal to the Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation.

A-3406. Do you assist seamen in getting compensation ?—Well, their applications go through us.

A-3407. Suppose a seaman dies at sea ; take a Pathan employed by the Peninsular and Oriental Co., whose home is on the Frontier or beyond, what steps are taken to see that his widow is informed of her rights ?—We do not inform the widow of her rights under the Workmen's Compensation Act ; we simply write and tell her that her husband is dead and leave it to her to claim the wages and the compensation if she is entitled to compensation. If she comes to our office in Bombay we help her.

A-3408. I am assuming that she is a thousand miles away on the Frontier.—We do not inform her of that by letter.

A-3409. Do you not think that it is likely that a great many dependants of that type of seamen principally would be unaware of their rights ?—It is possible, but our experience is that they know their rights pretty well.

A-3410. It is your experience that in most cases in which a claim lies a claim is preferred ?—Yes.

A-3411. Do you not think it would be advisable that some machinery should be set up by which, on the death of a seaman the initiative would be taken by your office or some other office ?—We are not supposed to take the initiative. In a matter of that sort it is a matter for the dependants of the deceased or the injured person.

A-3412. I am not thinking of the present. I am asking whether it would not be possible to have some such system ?—You mean to say to inform the dependants of their rights under the Act ? It would be as well perhaps to let them know.

A-3413. In Mr. Curry's memorandum he says : " Fines are fixed by the regulations for maintaining discipline." Does that mean that there is a fixed scale of fines ?—Yes.

A-3414. How has that worked ?—In the agreement a scale of fines is laid down, and it is left to the Master of the ship to levy those fines.

A-3415. Can you give some details ?—They are in the agreement—

| | | |
|---|----|-----------------|
| Not being on board at the time fixed | .. | .. 2 days' pay. |
| Failure to return to duty within the day on which the leave expires | .. | .. 1 day's pay. |
| Drunkenness (first offence) | .. | .. 1 day's pay. |
| „ (second offence) | .. | .. 2 days' pay. |
| Disobedience to lawful commands | .. | .. 2 days' pay. |
| Sleeping or negligent while on the look out | .. | .. 7 days' pay. |

and so on.

A-3416. Mr. Curry makes the observation that professional money-lenders do not lend money to seamen, and there is no facility, therefore, for them to get into debt. But they freely borrow money from the *serangs* ?—I believe so.

A-3417. Is it not possible that they may get heavily into debt in that way ?—No. I do not suppose the *serangs* would allow them to get into debt heavily ; *serangs* are not professional money-lenders.

A-3418. In cases where they are money-lenders ?—I do not think that they have sufficient money, to act as money-lenders.

A-3419. *Mr. Joshi*: Why do you say that direct recruitment by the employers is better than the system of recruitment through your office as it is going on now?—Because, as I have said before, it eliminates the middleman, and makes it a direct transaction between the employers and the employees, and I think that is more satisfactory than having a middleman.

A-3420. But you yourself agree that even in that direct recruitment there is scope for bribery. In the report made by one of the officers of the Social Service League, we are told that there is actual bribery even in the case of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. It is stated in that report that the members of the Union cannot get jobs unless they pay something to some persons. A man recently discharged stated that he paid Rs. 15 for securing a job. So far as your office is concerned, I take it that there is no corruption?—I believe there is no corruption in the Shipping Office.

A-3421. Suppose recruitment through your office continues, and that we abolish the broker, as recommended by the Clow Committee, will that not be better than direct recruitment?—From the point of view of lessening bribery and corruption; is that what you mean? Well, perhaps it would be.

A-3422. The suggestion is that recruitment will be done through your office, but without a broker. The real remedy lies in abolishing the brokers' license.—The broker does not recruit the men now.

A-3423. What does a broker do?—His principal duty is to give advances to the seamen; he gives them a month's advance.

A-3424. So far as recruitment is concerned, he performs no duty?—What he does just now is to assist. When men are required he helps to supply them.

A-3425. There is no great difficulty in abolishing the broker's license so far as recruitment is concerned?—Well, that remains to be seen. He assists at present in supplying men; it is a matter to be seen whether recruitment would proceed satisfactorily without the brokers. We have not tried that yet.

A-3426. Does your office or the special recruiting officer find it difficult to get men without the brokers?—No. As a matter of fact, the *serangs* come along to my office. They get their men but how they are getting their men we do not know.

A-3427. So far as the broker is concerned, he has no function at all in the matter of recruitment?—He assists.

A-3428. He does not perform any essential function?—No; not in that respect.

A-3429. The broker, so far as I know, performs another function, namely that of giving advances. Suppose we abolish brokers' licenses for recruitment and look to the unions or independent co-operative societies to perform this function of advancing money; would you favour that?—I would not recommend that.

A-3430. Co-operative credit societies would be under proper supervision and control; they would be properly supervised by the Government auditor and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. If a co-operative society of that kind is formed by the seamen, would not that be a better institution for advancing moneys than the brokers?—Well, they would have to be responsible in that case for desertions. The broker advances a month's wages and when the men desert, or are missing at the last moment, the broker is looked upon to supply the deficiency.

A-3431. As regards desertions the Clow Committee have made certain recommendations, and we may adopt those recommendations?—I do not remember the recommendations about desertions.

A-3432. That recommendation was to allow the recruiting officer to take in a reserve number of men in addition to those actually required. If you find that two or three men are missing at the last moment, the men from the reserve would take the place of the men missing?—That is what the broker does at present.

A-3433. That may be done by your office, and the co-operative society may help the men in the matter of advances?—I hardly think that our office should take up that work.

A-3434. There would not be additional work?—We would have to be responsible for desertions. In the case of advances made to the men it is now left to the brokers to recover them from the men who desert.

A-3435. The broker now makes the advance; but that function will be taken over by a co-operative credit society; the functions and powers of the broker will be exercised by the co-operative society?—It is a matter of doubt whether that would work satisfactorily.

A-3436. Are you following as far as possible the system of rotation?—Yes, as far as *serangs* and butlers are concerned. I mean to say that we recommend rotation.

A-3437. Can you tell us from your experience how far that system of rotation is accepted by the officers of the ships?—(Mr. Sonalker): I shall explain the whole procedure. When an officer of a ship comes along with a request for *serangs* and butlers, he is requested to take the men who are the longest out of employment. All the men present themselves with their discharge certificates in their hands. The selecting officer sees each man with his discharge certificate. But the period of unemployment is not the only factor that he takes into consideration; there are other factors which he takes into consideration, such as the man's previous service in his company's ships, his physique, general appearance and previous record. If the selecting officer happens to know that a particular *serang* has served under him before, he gives preference to that man over others. But there are some instances in which men who have been unemployed for one year or for a longer period are selected.

A-3438. I want some figures to show how far the system of rotation has been followed in actual practice. You have now had five months' experience; you know how many *serangs* have been on your register and how many people have been recruited. Will you be able to give us figures showing in how many cases the system of rotation was followed and in how many it was not followed?—I should have to take some time. The date of discharge was not shown in our columns until recently; only recently I have opened a column for that.

A-3439. What is your actual experience?—They do not follow the rotation system necessarily.

A-3440. Can you give us actual figures?—Yes; after some time.

A-3441. *The Chairman*: The point is this—how far the institution of your office has led to a spreadover of the employment amongst the would-be sailors.—I am not in a position to give the figures now.

A-3442. *Mr. Joshi*: You can give us them after some days?—Yes.

A-3443. Are you aware that in some cases crew are brought into Bombay from Calcutta just to create some kind of competition between Bombay seamen and Calcutta seamen or, say, to lower the wages in Bombay when they find it difficult to get sailors at particular rates?—(Mr. Robottom): I do not know that they are brought here to lower the wages of seamen in Bombay but it is a fact that some companies bring Calcutta seamen.

A-3444. Can you tell us why they do it?—I do not know. They say that they prefer Calcutta men in such cases.

A-3445. It is sufficient for me to know that they are brought here. Can you supply us with a copy of the sailors' agreement form?—Yes.

A-3446. You stated that *serangs* cannot make large advances to the seamen as they have not much to lend. In my experience I have seen in Bombay that *serangs* go on feeding the lascars for a number of months.—That is quite possible.

A-3447. Is that not a kind of loan to the lascars by the *serangs*?—Yes.

A-3448. So, generally the lascars are indebted to the *serangs*?—Yes; I believe in some cases.

A-3449. In a large number of cases, because most of the men, Hindus as well as Mahomedans, in Bombay are generally fed by the *serangs* themselves?—Many of them are, I believe.

A-3450. As you are now keeping a register of *serangs*, would you explain to us what the difficulty is in keeping a register also of the men under those *serangs*?—The work would be enormous.

A-3451. If you have a larger staff the work will not be very difficult?—With a larger staff it will not perhaps be very difficult, but the work will be enormous.

A-3452. With a larger staff the work may be done?—It may be possible.

A-3453. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What will be the cost of that larger staff?—I cannot say just now.

A-3454. *Mr. Asavle*: What are the respective functions of the Shipping Master, the Deputy Shipping Master, the Assistant Shipping Master and the broker?—The Shipping Master attends to all ships except the Peninsular and Oriental Company's ships; the Deputy attends to the Peninsular and Oriental ships and the work connected with them; the Assistant Shipping Master works in the office, he is superintendent of the office practically, and Mr. Sonalker is the other Assistant for recruitment.

A-3455. What are the functions of the shipping broker?—The functions of the shipping broker just now are to assist in the recruiting of the crew when called upon and to pay advances to the seamen.

A-3456. Any other functions?—Not that I know of.

A-3457. Do they not take the crew to the ships' officers?—Not now. All applications for seamen come to the Shipping Master and he deals with them, and when there is difficulty in obtaining crews the *serangs* apply to the shipping broker.

A-3458. Are you sure that they do not interfere with the employment of the seamen?—I do not think the broker interferes more than he is asked to do.

A-3459. Was there not a complaint from a *serang* that the Assistant Shipping Master supplied him to the Master of the ship, but that a broker interfered?—The broker has never interfered with the selection of a *serang*.

A-3460. Not with the *serang*, but with his employment on the ship?—I do not know.

A-3461. Do seamen get signed on and off on Sundays and holidays?—They are signed on on Sundays as on any other days.

A-3462. On Sundays and holidays; they are paid their advances later?—That is very seldom I should think.

A-3463. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do they not get usually paid from the date of signing on?—Usually, yes.

A-3464. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: But not always?—In a few cases, where it is convenient to sign on a crew about a week or so beforehand, i.e., before they join, the broker sometimes speaks to the Captain, and if the Captain agrees he pays the advances later.

A-3465. *Mr. Asavle*: Are they also signed on out of office hours?—Yes.

A-3466. Does any officer get any extra payment for this work?—Not for doing it out of office hours.

A-3467. On Sundays and holidays?—Yes.

A-3468. Do you not think that it is extra expenditure for Government?—I suppose it is a matter of justice to pay officers for working on Sundays and holidays.

A-3469. When they are paid advances for a long period, why should they be signed on one week before time?—It is a question for the Master of the ship and the shipping company to decide; if they decide that they do it.

A-3470. Will you furnish us with a statement of the number of signings on on Sundays and out of office hours for the last two years? You said that it was a small affair?—I did not say that it was a small affair. We can furnish a statement if necessary. We give a statement, as a matter of fact, to Government.

A-3471. They get some allowances; the Shipping Master gets paid for it.—The Shipping Master gets paid for working on Sundays.

A-3472. What is the practice as regards recruitment by the British India Steam Navigation Company?—The Peninsular and Oriental Company do their own recruiting, and the British India Steam Navigation Company do most of their own recruiting; but they call upon the brokers through the Shipping Master sometimes to assist them.

A-3473. Still the broker is called?—Yes. He is called upon sometimes by the officer to assist in producing a portion of the crew.

A-3474. Is it not a fact that the Shipping Master sometimes prohibits one set of men from entering the Shipping Office and gives all sorts of facilities for another set of men, allowing their representatives to move about freely in his office?—That is absolutely untrue.

A-3475. Do you know any of the gentlemen whose names I shall presently read out—Patrick DeSa, Logario Pereira, Augustus Fernandez, Antonio Rodrigues?—I know the first two.

A-3476. Do they come to your office?—Logario Pereira is a Peninsular and Oriental man; he has business to come to my office but not very often.

A-3477. Is he sent by his office?—Oh yes; I think so.

Sir Victor Sassoon: What is your point, Mr. Asavle?

Mr. Asavle: These are the few favourites, and they are given a monopoly to recruit men?—I can deny that absolutely.

A-3478. Are the men taken into service according to their order in the rotation ?—No.

A-3479. Do you not think that this is a hardship on the seamen ?—I do not think so. Ideally it is a very good thing, but in practice I do not think it would suit the companies, because it would mean that they would get men whom they do not want.

A-3480. Is it a fact that even seamen with the best certificates have been refused service ?—It is quite possible. The selecting officer selects men according to his own ideas of what he wants. We have nothing to do with the actual selections.

A-3481. Will not that increase the volume of unemployment ?—I do not think so.

A-3482. Are there not many seamen in Bombay who have been out of employment for 4, 5 or 6 years ?—Of course there are a number of men who have bad characters. The selecting officers do not wish to take them.

A-3483. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you mean to say that there are not good characters among seamen who have been unemployed for 4 or 5 years ?—I should not think that in their case, i.e., the men with good characters, it would be such a long period as four years.

A-3484. *Mr. Ahmed* : But many of these seamen who have been without employment for such a long time possess certificates from you and you have put your signature to those certificates. How then can you say that they are all bad characters ?—I did not say that they were all bad characters. Some men there are who are bad characters.

A-3485. *Mr. Asavle* : The Clow Committee recommended the employment of seamen by rotation and the Government of India passed their resolution No. 2663, Department of Commerce, dated 25th May 1922, approving of the recommendation. Is not your present practice in contravention of that recommendation ?—No, it is not. We have not received any orders that seamen must be employed in rotation.

A-3486. But there is the recommendation of the Clow Committee and the resolution of the Government of India ?—I do not think that all the recommendations of the Clow Committee were adopted by the Government of India.

The Chairman : Yes, we were so informed in Delhi.

A-3487. *Mr. Asavle* : Are pathans stationed at the shipping office ?—No. There is one Pathan employed by the shipping broker to safeguard his money. Generally when he goes on board to advance money to the crews he carries a good sum of money with him and in order to safeguard that he has employed a pathan.

A-3488. But why should he sit there at the shipping office the whole day ?—Because there is his master, the shipping broker. But he does not interfere with the shipping office.

A-3489. Did the seamen individually or the seamen's union prefer any complaint that these shipping brokers employed Pathans to assault Indian seamen ?—Perhaps there might have been a complaint from the union, but we never found that to be true.

A-3490. Did not the Police Commissioner draw your attention to this and post his own men to protect the Indian seamen ?—No, not so far as I know.

A-3491. Will you make enquiries and find out whether or not these Pathans generally assault the Indian seamen ?—I can say that they do not.

A-3492. *Mr. Ahmed* : How long have you been in this line before you took over charge of the present department ?—11 years.

A-3493. The Clow Committee recommended in 1922 that the broker system of recruiting seamen should be abolished altogether as it led to corruption and favouritism and as there was a widespread discontent amongst the ranks of seamen. Seven years have elapsed and still Government has not taken any action in the matter. Do you know why ?—They have given effect to the recommendations of the Clow Committee by appointing Mr. Sonalker as special recruiting officer.

The Chairman : This witness is not responsible for the actions of the Government of India. We dealt with this question at Delhi when we had Mr. Woodhead before us. He gave us the reasons why the full recommendations of the Clow Committee had not been carried out.

A-3494. *Mr. Ahmed* : Have you not received a number of petitions and memorials from the Seamen's Union regarding matters arising out of their employment ?—Yes, occasionally we have received them.

A-3495. Did they not ask for a State Employment Bureau for recruiting Indian seamen ?—I believe they asked for that.

A-3496. You give your men no housing accommodation and they have to live in lodging houses ?—Yes.

A-3497. Do not the lodging house keepers extort a lot of money from these seamen ?—I do not know of that. They have to pay rent to the lodging houses.

A-3498. But no accommodation is given to them either by Government or by the Shipping companies ?—No.

A-3499. Do they not generally suffer from diseases such as malaria and typhoid ?—I think they are generally more healthy than the men on shore.

A-3500. Is there any provision for medical attendance when they are ill ?—When they are on boardship the shipping companies provide the necessary medical facilities. But while on shore and unemployed they have no special facilities.

A-3501. If a workman died at sea in the discharge of his duties, you simply inform his wife or his relatives and do not take any steps to get compensation for his family under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—No, we leave that to the dependents to do.

A-3502. Is it not very difficult for the dependents to get compensation from companies which are not registered in India ?—No, the shipping companies now-a-days put in a clause in the agreement that they will pay compensation according to the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. That difficulty has now been removed.

A-3503. The memorandum of the Indian Seamen's Union, Bombay, says that the Peninsular and Oriental and the British India Steam Navigation Companies retain their seamen for four or five years thus swelling the waiting list of seamen wanting to be employed. Have you no voice in the matter ?—It might be true in some cases. We cannot do anything except recommend rotation to the companies. All the seamen should have a chance for selection and if they are not selected we cannot help them.

A-3504. So that there are many who have been unemployed for 4 or 5 years ?—I do not think they have been so long as that.

A-3505. Do you keep a register of seamen ?—No. We only keep a register of *serangs* and Butlers, not of others.

A-3506. How then can you contradict my statement that there are many who have been unemployed for four or five years ?—I have not noticed any such cases, nor has Mr. Sonalker done so.

A-3507. With regard to fines collected from seamen, how do you utilize the amount ?—The amount is credited to Government.

A-3508. Have these Indian seamen any sailors' home or training school or any other facilities ?—A scheme for building a sort of *Musafarkhana* is under consideration. A committee has been constituted for collecting the necessary funds. Besides this, the sailors have got their own clubs or *jamats*. For instance, the Goanese seamen live together in their clubs.

A-3509. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Reference was made to ships in Bombay recruiting seamen from Calcutta. Are the ships entitled to employ whatever type of seamen they choose ?—I believe they are.

A-3510. I understand that the Peninsular and Oriental Company like to have as firemen, men from the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. The British India Steam Navigation in Calcutta like to have men from Bombay as their firemen. Do you agree that a ship's master can choose his crews from any part of India he likes ?—He can legally.

A-3511. Do you think it advisable that there should be a restriction to the effect that ships in Calcutta should take their crew only from Calcutta, ships in Bombay should take their crew only from Bombay and ships in Karachi only from Karachi ?—If that is done, it would satisfy the men, because they would be employed in their respective ports.

A-3512. What about Karachi men ?—I think there are hardly any men in Karachi.

A-3513. But we had complaints in Karachi that preference was given to men from Bombay ?—I do not know of any ships that recruit their crew from Karachi.

A-3514. When the seamen are signed on to whom are the advances given ? Are they given to the seamen themselves ?—Yes.

A-3515. Not to the *serangs* ?—No.

A-3516. Do you pay actually to the individual men concerned ?—We see to it that that is done. The shipping office clerk does that.

A-3517. To whom are the wages paid ?—To the men themselves individually.

A-3518. *Mr. Lallji* : Is there a broker employed in your office for the purpose of bringing seamen ?—Now the broker does not do what he used to do. He only helps when he is called upon to do so.

A-3519. Does he not give advances to the seamen ?—Yes, he does.

A-3520. What rate of interest does he charge on the advances ?—He does not charge any interest.

A-3521. But he lends the money ?—He advances a month's pay to the seaman on behalf of the company, and charges a commission to the company and not to the seaman.

A-3522. What is the commission ?—I believe it is about 5 to 7½ per cent.

A-3523. How many companies employ these brokers ?—I believe all the companies except the B. I. S. N. and P. & O. The broker does not supply the crew now except when he is called upon to assist a *serang* who has not been able to make up his full quota. It is only then that he assists the *serang*.

A-3524. What staff do these brokers have ?—I think they have about five or six *ghat serangs*, a cashier and three or four clerks.

A-3525. You have a list of *serangs* and butlers ?—Yes.

A-3526. Do they not occupy a position similar to jobbers in mills with regard to mill-hands ?—I do not know the system in the mills.

A-3527. Have you not heard of the *mukadams* supplying mill-hands ?—I am sorry. I could not say what the system is.

A-3528. I take it that under the present system you have got a register of *serangs* and butlers and they supply you with most of the seamen required ?—Yes, that is so.

A-3529. With regard to the amount of compensation payable to a workman under the Workmen's Compensation Act, is there any difference between the maximum and minimum amounts payable formerly under the English Act and those payable at present under the Indian Act ?—I have not compared the amounts payable in the two cases and I do not know whether there is any difference. But it is more satisfactory for the men to have the Indian Act, because they can get their compensation in Bombay and if they are not satisfied they can appeal to the Commissioner in Bombay.

A-3530. How can a man employed in a cargo boat which has no agents here in Bombay get compensation in case of accident ?—If he is signed on in Bombay there must be an agent here.

A-3531. Does the shipping office insist on the owner of boat depositing a certain amount in advance in case a necessity arises for paying compensation ?—No, we do not do that.

A-3532. Do you not think it advisable to ask the owners of steamers to do so ?—I hardly think so.

A-3533. Suppose a man comes from the Punjab and is engaged in a Japanese Cargo boat. If he had to get compensation, how could he do it ?—We have never heard of any cases where the shipping company has not paid compensation.

A-3534. Do you not think it advisable to ask these shipping companies to deposit a certain amount for compensation ?—We have never found that necessary. I do not think it will be necessary to do that.

A-3535. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do other countries do that ?—I do not think they do.

A-3536. *Mr. Lallji* : Have you had experience of any other country ?—At any rate I have never heard of that being done.

A-3537. In your memorandum it is stated that the supply of labour exceeds the demand. Why then do you want brokers to assist in recruitment ?—As a matter of fact we get on mostly without brokers and they are called upon only to assist any *serang* who has not been able to make up his seamen.

A-3538. With regard to housing you say that five or six people live in a single room. Have you seen those rooms ?—No. I believe they are living like that.

A-3539. How then did you say that their health was very good when you have not seen their houses even ?—I said that the general health of the seamen compares favourably with the general health of men on shore.

A-3540. You spoke of a scheme for building houses for these seamen. How long has this been under consideration ?—I think about two years.

A-3541. *Mr. Cliff* : In your memorandum you have described the duties of the special recruiting officer. Has he any other duties to do besides those mentioned here ?—

(Mr. Sonalker): Besides those duties he has generally to investigate complaints of seamen which are generally made to him. He also carries on correspondence with the Calcutta Shipping Office.

A-3542. Can a new recruit get on your register as a leading hand or a *serang* or a butler?—If a *tindal* is promoted as a *serang* he can be registered.

A-3543. Have you any control over the number of new recruits that come as seamen?—No.

A-3544. Have you adopted a policy similar to that adopted in Calcutta?—I do not know what policy is followed in Calcutta.

A-3545. In Calcutta they tell us that the number of new recruits was reduced under the orders of the shipping master. Are you giving any orders in order to reduce the number of new recruits in Bombay?—(Mr. Sonalker): No.

A-3546. Does the policy pursued at present lead to the casualization of seamen labour or to the de-casualization of seamen labour; in other words, are you in any way restricting the number of seamen available for employment?—No.

A-3547. I understand that a *serang* being next on turn for employment under the P & O. is warned about a month in advance. Can you tell me whether he receives any pay prior to the actual signing on?—I am not concerned with the P. & O. recruitment.

A-3548. Can you tell me the basis of pay of *ghat serangs*?—I do not know.

A-3549. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We have a statement here from Messrs. Chichgar and Co., Shipping Brokers wherein they say "Ever since the substitution of a special recruiting officer we have no hand in the recruitment of crews." Is that a proper statement of the position?—(Mr. Robottom): Yes; I believe so.

A-3550. Then why do you say that the brokers are sometimes used?—As I say, when a *serang* cannot make up his crew he goes to the broker for assistance and the broker assists him in getting his crew. There are cases where the *serangs* apparently cannot get men themselves and they call upon the broker to assist them in getting men.

A-3551. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has not that been happening since 1st July 1929?—Yes.

A-3552. Are Messrs. Chichgar and Co. doing this work since the 1st of July?—Yes, when they are called upon to assist.

A-3553. But they state definitely here that they have no hand?—They have no hand unless they are called upon to assist.

A-3554. So they have a hand in obtaining the crew when they are called upon to do so?—Yes.

A-3555. *Mr. Asavle*: In your memorandum under the heading "Health" you say "Provision is made for complaints from seamen regarding bad or insufficient food or water and for compensation therefor to the seamen." You must be aware that many representations in regard to the supply of bad food were made. May I know whether they ever got compensation, or what did you do in those cases?—I personally have not received any complaint about bad food. I believe Mr. Curry also has not received complaints—if at all it must have been very seldom—because I remember asking him on that point and he said that it was practically unknown for the men to complain about their food.

A-3556. Did you get representations from the Seamen's Union with regard to this matter?—I do not remember having received any complaints about food. I may state that the food is inspected by the shipping master at the beginning of a voyage.

A-3557. Have you received any complaints about the insufficiency of food that is given to them?—I have never received any complaints of that sort.

A-3558. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is there a difference in the quantity of food given to the Indian seamen and the European seamen?—The food is different in each case.

A-3559. I am speaking of the quantity. Take, for instance, sugar. Is there any difference in the quantity?—I have not compared each item like that; but it is altogether a different food.

A-3560. *Mr. Asavle*: Under the heading "Trade Combinations" you say "It will be seen.....that the majority of the seamen in the deck and engine room departments do not belong to the Unions....." Have you got the report of the union?—Yes.

A-3561. Do you know that almost all the men in the deck and engine room departments are members of the union?—I do not think so.

A-3562. Who gave you this information that the majority of the men in the deck and engine room departments are not members of the union ?—We deal with the men every day, and we ask them.

A-3563. Do you know that nearly 5,364 members of the engine room and 5,246 of the deck are members of the union ?—I do not know about that.

A-3564. With regard to strikes and lock-outs, will you tell us where was the strike amongst seamen ?—As we say here, there have been no proper strikes.

A-3565. Do you know the reason why there is no strike now ?—I suppose the men are satisfied.

A-3566. Have not representations been made through the union ; if they were satisfied no complaints would have been made ?—I think the men themselves are generally satisfied with their wages and the treatment generally.

A-3567. Will you tell us whether complaints have been received from the union by your office or not ?—We receive complaints from the Union.

A-3568. Then how do you say that they have no complaints ?—If they had they would have personally come to us.

A-3569. Do you not know that they have a registered Union and that it is not their duty to go personally but that they go through the Union ?—I do not know what they say to the Union.

A-3570. You have received several times representations through the Union ?—Yes, sometimes.

A-3571. You cannot therefore say that they have no grievance ?—As I say, the men seem to be generally satisfied with their wages and conditions generally.

A-3572. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Even when there is unemployment ?—Unemployment is another point. It is true that there are a number of unemployed ; that cannot be helped.

A-3573. *Mr. Asavle* : With regard to wages, up to 1922 the men were getting increased wages but from 1923 their wages have been decreased. What is this due to ?—Excluding the P. & O. Company the other companies' rates of wages were slightly higher than the last rates fixed in 1923.

A-3574. *Mr. Joshi* : It is less now ?—Yes, but it is more than what it was at the time of the war.

A-3575. *Mr. Asavle* : Do other companies offer less wages than the P. & O. offers ?—They do.

A-3576. How do you say that the people of other companies are satisfied when they get less wages than the wages given by the P. & O. ?—It depends upon the standard of men. I think the P. & O. get the best man ; I think they get a better man because they pay for him.

A-3577. Is it not a fact that in the absence of any union of seamen and as recruitment entirely rested with the brokers the rates of wages were reduced by 10 to 15 per cent. in 1923 ?—The wages were fixed at a conference of shipowners in 1923. Those wages were slightly lower than the wages fixed about 1920 but they were a good deal higher than the wages which were in force before and during the war.

A-3578. A cut of 10 to 15 per cent. was made in 1923 ?—It was not as much as that.

A-3579. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Do you know what the figure was ?—No, but I have seen the wages ; I believe the reduction was very small.

A-3580. *Diwan Chaman Lall* : Will you kindly supply us figures showing the number of *serangs* and butlers who are actually employed and those that are unemployed and obtain also information of a similar nature from the P. & O. and B. I. S. N. Companies ?

A-3581. *The Chairman* : The Commission would like to know whether there is any movement to decasualize seamen's labour, or on the other hand whether the policy is intending to increase the casualization ; that is to say, the proportion between the number of men employed at any one time and the proportion on the lists of would-be sailors ?—We have got no register of the unemployed seamen ; we maintain registers only in the case of *serangs* and butlers. We cannot give the number of unemployed. We do not have any influence on increasing or reducing the number of seamen.

A-3582. We were told that in Calcutta there has been a reduction of about 5,000 in the lists ?—There has been no reduction here.

A-3583. Therefore the number of men over whom the work has to be spread is not diminishing in Bombay but perhaps increasing ?—Yes ; it is not diminishing, as far as I know.

A-3584. And the steps recently taken have done nothing to bring the industry of shipping to a position where more regular employment can be given?—As I say, we are only dealing with *serangs* and butlers; we recommend employment in rotation.

A-3585. Have you any figures which would enable us to understand the position in Bombay as regards unemployment?—I understand that there is unemployment just now on account of the trade depression.

A-3586. The shipping trade always does fluctuate?—The unemployment is not greater, I think, than usual at times of depression.

A-3587. What we would like to know is whether the tendency in Bombay is the same as it is in Calcutta or whether anything is being done?—Nothing is being done in that respect to increase or decrease the number of men.

A-3588. Will you give us figures to enable us to understand at any one time on an average how many seamen are at sea compared with the total number of seamen?—You want figures in respect of *serangs* only?

A-3589. Can you give us figures in respect of *serangs* and butlers?—Yes.

A-3590. That would enable us to judge whether the present system is a good one or not, and whether any further steps should be taken to limit the field of recruitment so that there can be more continuous employment?—We have taken no steps to limit the field of recruitment.

The Chairman: We have made enquiries both from Calcutta and from the Central Government so that we can be quite clear on that point, whether the position is improving or getting worse or whether it merely remains stationary. We want to get an idea as to how long, on the average, the men have to wait between one period of employment and another.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. MOHAMMED EBRAHIM, Serang, Acting General Secretary,
Mr. A. B. MORAES, Joint Secretary, and Mr. P. G. KANEKAR,
Adviser, representing the Indian Seamen's Union.**

A-3591. *The Chairman*: Have any of you served as seamen?—(Mr. Ebrahim): I have been a seaman for about 30 years. The other two witnesses have not been seamen.

A-3592. What is the date of the formation of the Indian Seamen's Union?—The present union was formed in 1926; before that date there was a union of the saloon department only which was formed in 1919.

A-3593. What is the membership?—12,007 saloon workers, 5,367 engine room workers, 5,246 deck workers, making 22,620 in all; that is the present membership of the union.

A-3594. And that membership is out of a total, as you tell us in your memorandum of about 70,000 seamen in Bombay?—Yes.

A-3595. We observe that there are two unions representing the seamen of Bombay?—There is another union called the *Bombay Seamen's Union* in which only saloon workers are included, no deck and engine room workers. Our union includes all classes of workers: saloon, deck and engine room. When the Indian Seamen's union was first formed it included only saloon workers, but it was re-organized in 1926 and the deck and engine room workers were then included.

A-3596. Was that the point of difference between your union and the Bombay Seamen's union, that they preferred to include only saloon workers?—There is that difference as to sphere of work, but there is also another difference: ours is an independent union while we have reason to suspect that the other union was set up by the employers in order to defeat our union.

A-3597. I noticed that statement in your memorandum; of course we shall hear from the other union what their point of view is. But with regard to your own union, I think I have it clearly now that you include saloon workers as well as deck workers and other classes of workers: the whole body of seamen as the term is generally used?—Yes.

A-3598. With regard to the 70,000 seamen which you tell us there are of all ranks and categories in Bombay, can you tell me how many of that 70,000 on the average

are employed and how many unemployed at one time ?—One-third of that 70,000 are employed and two-thirds are unemployed. That is, of course, an approximate figure.

A-3599. I understand you to say that in the present state of trade there is only employment at any one time for one-third of the total number of seamen, and in your memorandum your claim is that that employment should be spread over the whole body so that all should get an equal chance of engagement ?—Yes, by turns.

A-3600. That would mean that on the average a seaman would only get one year's employment in three years ; there would be two years gap between each of his engagements if they were spread absolutely equally over the whole body ?—Yes.

A-3601. Do you think it is desirable that there should be so many seamen waiting for engagements that it would only be possible for each of them to obtain an engagement in one year out of three ? We are told, for instance, that in Calcutta they are endeavouring to reduce the number of seamen, on the registers so that more constant employment can be given to those who remain as seamen ?—If employment is given by turns, if a man is discharged after one year's service instead of serving continuously for four or five years, as happens at present, there will be less unemployment.

A-3602. That is to say you would wish such employment as there is to be equally spread over the whole body of 70,000 ?—Yes, and there should be no further recruits for the time being.

A-3603. Reading your memorandum, I take it that the second main point is that you ask for the full application of the recommendations of the Clow report ?—(Mr. Kanekar) : Yes.

A-3604. And you wish that to be applied to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co. as well as the other shipping companies ?—(Mr. Ebrahim) : Yes. The engine room and deck workers are changed after one year but in the saloons they are kept on year after year, and in consequence there is great discontent among the saloon workers.

A-3605. I have just been informed that you, Mr. Ebrahim, were yourself a member of the Clow Committee ?—Yes.

A-3606. And joined in those recommendations ?—Yes.

A-3607. Therefore what you put before the Commission, which I am sure will have their consideration, is that although the Government of India has partially applied the recommendations, it has not applied them in full and you ask that they should be applied as a whole. Since the Report of the Clow Committee the Government has taken one step, at any rate, in the appointment of this Special Recruiting Officer. You say in your memorandum that no doubt his appointment was an effective check on the evils of the broker system in selection of seamen, but the advantages which have resulted are so meagre that they have not in any material way improved the conditions of engagement and recruitment. Do you maintain before the Commission that the experience of the last five months has shown no improvement in recruitment ?—It has made some improvement in diminishing the bribery and the payments that have been made, but it has not made an improvement in the equal spreadover of the employment so far as *serangs* and butlers are concerned. Officers still pick up men ; the selection still remains with the shipping authorities ; they favour some men in the way of continuous employment and that makes it worse for the rest.

A-3608. Mr. Clow : Suppose your system was adopted, as the Chairman has explained, it would mean that every *serang* would have one year's work and two year's idleness ?—After the seaman has served the first year, he will go back home after being discharged and will wait for his turn when the other people come back.

A-3609. If, as you say, there are three *serangs* for every job, on an average a man will be idle for two-thirds of the time ?—Yes, but not exactly for one year and two years.

A-3610. On an average ?—Yes.

A-3611. Do you not think that would be a very bad system ?—It would be much better than the present system.

A-3612. Why ?—At present one man gets continuous employment while another man does not get employment for seven years.

A-3613. But do you not think it would be better if as many men as possible got very nearly continuous employment and the others were forced into some other occupation ?—The best way would be to stop fresh recruitment, so that there would not be much encouragement to other people to come ; men should only be taken from the register of seamen.

A-3614. Do you agree with me that efforts should be made to reduce the number of seamen looking for jobs?—Yes, that is desirable; but further recruitment can only be stopped by registering all the seamen and selecting men only from that list.

A-3615. Do you not think that a seaman who has only two or three months' holiday is likely to be more efficient than a man who is looking out for a job for two or three years?—If he rests for some years he may be in better health and more efficient.

A-3616. But a man who has only two or three months' unemployment at a time will be better paid?—Yes.

A-3617. You remember that the Committee recommended that the officers should be at liberty to choose *serangs* from those who had been not more than three months out of employment?—Yes.

A-3618. But that recommendation is not the same as the recommendation now made by the union. Does the union agree with that recommendation of the Committee or not?—I do not agree; it is impracticable.

A-3619. Why do you think it is impracticable?—There are a number of seamen who have not been employed for a number of years and preference is given to fresh men over their heads.

A-3620. In your supplementary memorandum you complain that the wages are very inadequate and that it is hard to live on the wages; but in your first memorandum, when you are pleading for this rotation system, you say the seamen can very well afford a holiday as they will have accumulated some savings. Do the seamen come back with savings?—Yes.

A-3621. How long do their savings last?—It depends upon the circumstances; if the man stays in Bombay it will not last long; if he goes to his native place it will last for a longer time—4 to 6 months.

A-3622. The pay is not inadequate provided a man can secure fairly continuous employment?—Provided he gets continual employment, of course he can save, but his savings become exhausted during unemployment.

A-3623. In other words, if your system were adopted and men were unemployed for long periods, the pay would be inadequate?—Yes.

A-3624. *Mr. Joshi*: As regards workmen's compensation do you experience any difficulties as to seamen on coasting steamers?—Seamen on coasting steamers are taken up without any agreements and if they are injured they are not entitled to any compensation.

A-3625. These coasting steamers are generally registered not in India but in the United Kingdom?—Yes.

A-3626. What remedy do you suggest for the difficulty caused by crews being brought from Calcutta to Bombay?—There should be two separate registers for Calcutta and Bombay and in Bombay only seamen on the Bombay register should be taken.

A-3627. Have these *lascars* to pay a fee when they are discharged?—Yes, one rupee.

A-3628. Do they get a receipt for that?—No.

A-3629. Who takes that rupee?—The clerk of the Shipping Master takes one rupee at the time of discharging.

A-3630. *The Chairman*: That is the office charge for the certificate?—No. Extra Rs. 3 are charged for a certificate.

A-3631. *Mr. Joshi*: Why do they not give a receipt?—There is no practice of giving a receipt.

A-3632. Have you any difficulty with regard to the Shipping Office itself?—The present Shipping Office is at a distance of about 3 miles from the docks, which causes much inconvenience to seamen; the Shipping Office should be as near the docks as possible.

A-3633. Is there any difficulty experienced on account of the advances given by the broker under the Merchant Shipping Act which prescribes that at the time of signing on a man should get an advance?—In actual practice it is sometimes paid 4 days afterwards and consequently there is great difficulty.

A-3634. Are you satisfied with the rations that are given?—Some articles of food are insufficient in quantity, such as mutton, sugar, tea, *ghee*, which are insufficient for Indian seamen.

A-3635. As regards accommodation the Merchant Shipping Act provides that so far as European seamen are concerned they should have 60 cubic feet, while for Indian

seamen it prescribes 30 cubic feet. - What do you think of this discrimination ?—It is a hardship to Indian seamen that there is insufficient accommodation ; the Indian seamen should be given the same accommodation as the English seamen.

A-3636. What are your relations with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company ?—In respect of saloon workers there is trouble between the union and the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

A-3637. *Mr. Joshi* : As regards your articles of agreement, if the *lascar* seamen do not serve for the period mentioned, they are fined ; is that true ?—Yes.

A-3638. Do the companies undertake a similar responsibility of giving you employment for a particular period ?—No.

A-3639. What is your suggestion in that respect ?—The agreement should be binding on both parties.

A-3640. In your service sheet there is a column for remarks regarding the quality of work done and the character of the seaman ; have you anything to say on that point ?—Sometimes even after a service of 20 years or so a man gets a very bad mark on the service sheet and it makes it very hard for him to secure employment afterwards. That column should be abolished.

A-3641. *Miss Power* : I should like to know how accurate are the figures as to the monthly cost of food for a sailor on shore which are referred to under different paragraphs in your memorandum ?—The articles of food for people of different Provinces are different. During times of unemployment a man has to live on a very spare diet, but that should not be taken as a standard.

A-3642. What do you say is the minimum upon which a seaman can live in Bombay ?—Food for a man costs at least Rs. 21 or 22.

A-3643. *Mr. Asavle* : Is bribery still going on ?—Yes.

A-3644. Who takes the bribes ?—The *serang* takes money from the men who are to be employed under him. The ship's officer or the broker then has to be paid. Of course, there are some officers on ships who are free from this bribery, but others take bribes. The *serang* represents to the men that the officer has to be gratified by paying him something. The men have no means of knowing the facts, they have to believe the *serangs* because the *serang* goes to the officer and talks to him and something transpires between them. The facts are unknown to the men. There is bribery at present.

A-3645. Did you not make representations as regards this bribery to the shipping authorities as well as to the Police Commissioner ?—Yes, we did.

A-3646. What do you propose to do ?—If the Police prepare a case against them, we shall take the matter up.

A-3647. Were these advances given to the seamen near the shipping office or outside the shipping office ?—Inside the shipping office.

A-3648. Did the Police Commissioner say it was not within his jurisdiction ?—Yes. All this occurs in the shipping office which is not within the jurisdiction of the Police ; it is not on the public street ; it is in the office and so the Police cannot take any steps.

A-3649. Is there any fresh recruitment of seamen at present ?—Yes, on every steamer several new men are taken on.

A-3650. You have said in answer to *Mr. Clow* that when a seaman returns from service his savings will last him 4 to 6 months if he lives in his village ; but how long has he to serve to be able to save that amount ?—He must have served at least one year in order to be able to save so much.

A-3651. Where the recruitment is done by the companies themselves, does the broker still take away those men ?—Yes, the broker interferes even now as regards employment. Some companies have said to the Assistant Shipping Officer that the brokers interfere with the recruitment ; that is so with regard to the British India Steam Navigation and other companies.

A-3652. Has there recently been such a case ?—Yes, the union people are harassed by the brokers. In one case a *serang* was refused employment by the brokers because he was working as one of the secretaries of the union ; a complaint was afterwards sent by the union to the Assistant Shipping Master.

A-3653. What did he reply ?—No reply was received.

A-3654. Is it a fact that almost all the deck and engine room seamen are members of your union ?—Yes, they are, with the exception of a few *Punjabis* and *Pathans*.

A-3655. When was the last strike ?—1919.

A-3656. Is it not a fact that since this union has been formed the union authorities have been trying to induce the men not to go on strike ?—Yes.

A-3657. Is it not a fact that you have sent all grievances to the Shipping Master as well as to Government ?—Yes.

A-3658. Do you know how many complaints have been made ?—20 or 25 recently, other than previous ones.

A-3659. Will you give the Commission a statement about that to-morrow or the day after ?—Yes.

A-3660. What wages were paid to saloon workers in 1915 ?—A *serang* would get Rs. 60.

A-3661. I see in a statement which has been submitted to the Commission it is given as Rs. 40 ?—I myself received Rs. 60 in 1915.

A-3662. When were the wages cut ?—In 1923.

A-3663. What was the cause ?—The brokers and the shipping master told the men that one or two ships had not taken crews from Bombay, and said : “ Therefore it is better for you to take smaller wages than that ships should not take crews from Bombay ; you had better put your finger impressions on these documents ”. They reduced the wages by that means. The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was the only company which did not reduce wages.

A-3664. *Mr. Lallji* : If the *serangs*, butlers and brokers were abolished, would you be able to supply men to the shipping companies ?—Yes.

A-3665. What have the seamen to pay to the brokers in order to get employment ?—Those who come back from voyages and are able to pay as bribery Rs. 30, 40 or 50 get employment immediately ; those who have been ashore for a long time, being without money, cannot pay anything, and do not get employment.

A-3666. *Mr. Cliff* : Is the principle of sharing work advocated in order to avoid favouritism ?—(*Mr. Kanekar*) : Yes.

A-3667. I think you advocate that there should be registration of seamen ?—Yes.

A-3668. Would the union propose along with the scheme of registration that a period should be allowed for all the seamen to register who desired so to do, and then no more should be allowed to register after a stated period ?—So long as the present unemployment continues.

A-3669. Is it the desire of the seamen that there should be no more seamen registered than are required ?—No. All must be registered.

A-3670. Would you be in favour of no more recruitment being allowed until such time as the numbers have been decreased to the requirements ?—Yes, I should be in favour of that.

A-3671. We are informed that as far as recruitment at Bombay is concerned the firemen are recruited from the *Pathans*, the saloon stewards from the *Goanese*, and the deck hands mainly from around Bombay ?—No. That is the case only with the P. & O. Company.

A-3672. Taking those three classes, what holiday do they desire after being a year at sea ? It is put in this way, that a seaman after a period of service wants to return to his native place. May I take it that these three classes all want a holiday ?—Yes.

A-3673. What period of holiday would meet the general desire ?—3 or 4 months' holiday after a year's service.

A-3674. Is that applicable to all the three classes to which I have referred ?—Yes.

A-3675. And may the Commission take it that the statement in your memoranda with regard to the establishment of a bureau with the assistance named therein expressed the general demand of the members of your union ?—Yes.

A-3676. *Mr. Ahmed* : You were a member of the Clow Committee, which has condemned the system of brokers and recommended its abolition ?—(*Mr. Ebrahim*) : Yes.

A-3677. That system has not been abolished for the last seven years, and that is your grievance ?—Yes.

A-3678. You wanted that a State Employment Bureau for Seamen should be established immediately ?—Yes.

A-3679. That has not been done, and that is another grievance of yours ?—Yes.

A-3680. How many hours have the seamen to work ?—From nine to twelve hours, according to the nature of the officer. If the officer is good he will give them easier hours. Usually they are working from morning to evening with only two hours' interval for taking food.

A-3681. What is the condition as regards hours in other countries ?—I do not know that.

A-3682. As regards accommodation, the seamen of other countries are given a place in the saloon ; what is the practice here ?—They are given a separate place in the deck, but the accommodation is less spacious than that given to seamen of other countries.

A-3683. As regards food and clothing, how do you compare with other countries ; what will be the comparative costs ?—I cannot say.

A-3684. There is a great deal of difference ?—Yes.

A-3685. If the cost of the food given to seamen in India is Rs. 20, what will be the cost in other countries ?—We get only 4 ounces of meat, whereas in other countries they get half a lb. or more.

A-3686. As regards vegetables and other things ?—Except rice, flour and *dal*, in other countries they get a larger supply than we get.

A-3687. As regards clothing ?—We do not get any clothing.

A-3688. What do they get in other countries ?—I cannot say. When a ship goes to America we are given clothing, but when it returns to England the clothing is taken back from us.

A-3689. Have you got rest houses or centres for the education of your children ?—No.

A-3690. No recreation grounds either ?—No.

A-3691. Some of you work for many years ; do you get pensions or gratuities ?—We do not get even proper food ; how can we get pension or gratuity ?

A-3692. You stated that the *serangs* take bribes to higher officials. Who are they ?—The Chief Officer and the Chief Engineer.

The Chairman : He did not state that as a fact ; he stated that there was a suspicion.

Mr. Joshi : He said that some of them do, but not all.

A-3693. *Mr. Ahmed* : As regards housing, you stated that there are private lodgings ; what is their condition ?—We get a small lodging where 50 or 60 of the men put up, and each man has just enough space to put a box and sleep on it.

A-3694. You have seen other countries ; will you kindly tell us whether you have seen in any other country in the world the sort of conditions under which Indian seamen have to live ?—No.

A-3695. You desire that Government should come forward and pass necessary legislation to compel the employers to supply you with all that is given to seamen in other countries ?—Yes.

A-3696. You want the same comforts, and you are entitled to it as a matter of right ?—Yes.

A-3697. *The Chairman* : May I take it, as a result of what you have told us, that you would wish to register the whole of the seventy thousand seamen at present and to divide the employment as near as may be possible equally between them ?—Yes.

A-3698. But you would wish by closing recruitment for a time to reduce the total number, so that more work might come to each person on the register ?—Yes.

A-3699. I take it then, as you said that three to four months is the average holiday that a man would wish to have after 12 months' voyage, therefore you would wish the total to be reduced from 70,000 to about 30,000 in order to achieve that object ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. J. P. LOBO, B.A., LL.B., and Mr. PATRICK DeSa, representatives
of the Bombay Seamen's Union.**

A-3700. *The Chairman* : Mr. Lobo, you are appearing in place of Mr. S. B. de Silva, M.A., LL.B., the President of the Bombay Seamen's Union ?—Yes.

A-3701. What is Mr. Patrick DeSa ?—He is the present Secretary of the Union,

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A-3702. Mr. Lobo, may I take it that you have not served as a seaman?—I have not served as a seaman; I was the Secretary of the Union; I resigned; now they want me to help in the matter. I have been in touch with the Union.

A-3703. The other gentleman, the present Secretary, has been a seaman?—Yes he has been a seaman.

A-3704. Would you tell me the date of the formation of your Bombay Seamen's Union?—There has been a Seamen's Union among the Goans or Christians of India for the last 35 years; but the present union, under its present name, was formed on the 15th March 1926.

A-3705. Would you tell me the present membership of the Union?—6,500.

A-3706. Are those confined to the saloon?—It is inclusive of saloon, pantry and galley departments.

A-3707. We have been told that there are 70,000 seamen in the City of Bombay do you agree with that figure?—I do not, but I am not in a position to say how much that figure is exaggerated.

A-3708. Among the members of your Union, can you tell us how many of them are usually employed at one time?—2,500 are permanently employed; a larger number is unemployed.

A-3709. That does not differ very substantially from the statement that two out of three on the average are unemployed?—That is correct.

A-3710. Is it the desire of your union that the employment should be equally spread over the whole of the registered seamen?—It is our desire that the present seamen on the register should be kept on the register but that no new recruits should be enlisted, so that after some time there may be service available at shorter intervals than at present.

A-3711. I take it, after reading your memorandum where you refer to the arrangement of direct engagement by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, that you are satisfied with that system?—Yes; we are. The unfortunate thing is, during the War there was a demand for a larger number of seamen than existed during the past; we had to man almost all the ships in the British Mercantile Marine that touched Bombay; and that demand gave rise to an increase in the supply of seamen from 5,000 to about 8,000 or 9,000. That has created the present difficult situation. We should wish that the War had continued.

A-3712. What is your suggestion?—My suggestion is this: that no fresh recruits should be taken until the number is reduced. There are a large number of men at present; when the old men retire, the young men will get service at least after a period of six months' rest.

A-3713. Do you not think that it is possible by any means short of that or in addition to that to reduce the number of people waiting so long for employment?—The conditions in Bombay are such that there is no scope for employment elsewhere. The union has been trying its level best to induce the members to take to various jobs, but we have not succeeded so far.

A-3714. In your memorandum you say that the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company "has not definitely recognized the necessity of distribution according to turns; but thanks to the Superintendent Purser, Mr. W. Gordon, the union has been allowed to call the members of the service after a period of one year." Is that an arrangement arrived at between you?—Yes. We have been given such facilities particularly during Mr. Gordon's time; but the union wants that the Company should recognize the right of the union to call back men who have been in service for a particular period, so as to give chances of employment to others who have been unemployed for a particular period. Till now that has not been done.

A-3715. That is a practical arrangement which has been made now?—Yes, with a view to meet the present situation.

A-3716. In your memorandum you suggest that recruitment to the various classes of seamen should be made directly through the respective unions; or in other words you want to have a monopoly of recruitment?—The saloon service has been exclusively recruited from the Indian Christians from the very beginning of the mercantile marine. I had a conference with the representatives of the several unions in 1926 when we tried to amalgamate them all into one union. They would not consent to amalgamation unless the various lines of service were divided among the different unions, so that deck and engine crews might be recruited from other than Indian Christians, and Indian Christians might monopolize the saloon service. There was also one reason for this proposal. The ways of life of Indian Christians were different from those of others. From the economic

point of view it was thought that this method of recruitment would diminish the volume of unemployment.

A-3717. Is it the policy of your union to confine itself to a particular class?—Yes. In the beginning we admitted to our union members who were not in the saloon service. They were only very few. The union wanted to discourage the admission of members who were not saloon crews, so that within four or five months of the starting of the union we had nothing to do with other classes of people.

A-3718. The membership of your union is about 6,500?—Yes.

A-3719. What proportion of the total crew engaged in the saloon, pantry and so on, do you include in your union? Will that be 50 or 70 per cent.?—Our union contains two-thirds of the total crew engaged in these departments.

A-3720. You claim that in regard to this class of seamen your union has two-thirds of them as members?—Yes, we do.

A-3721. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum you say that the advances to be made to the seamen should be made by the Unions so that it might bring to them a handsome revenue. How will you get the revenue?—I understand that the companies pay the brokers a certain percentage of the sum advanced as commission. The companies fear that the men may not turn up after they are signed on and pay a certain percentage to the broker who takes the risk. We want that the right of advancing money to the seamen should be given to the union and that the broker's commission should be given to the union.

A-3722. You suggest that the union should be allowed to do the same service as the brokers do now, and get the same return as they get. Yes, but there is this difference. The union is an organization controlled by the seamen themselves. The money that is now paid to the contractor is wasted and is of no benefit to the seamen. On the other hand if the union gets the money it will utilize it for welfare work among seamen.

A-3723. But why should you be given this percentage of commission? Why should not the seamen be given the full amount?—The funds of the union are for the benefit of the seamen.

A-3724. Why not then take the whole amount of the advance?—At present after paying the seamen their full advance amount, the company pays an extra amount as commission to the broker. We want only that amount to be paid to us.

A-3725. But the broker is doing the same service as you want to do?—But in times of crisis the union as an organization of seamen themselves will be able to do more than any broker.

A-3726. *Mr. Ahmed*: Yours is not a profiteering concern as the broker's. Your object is to help the seamen?—Yes, that is correct.

A-3727. *Mr. Clow*: You say that the brokers are "useless parasites"?—Yes.

A-3728. And you want to be parasites yourselves?—No. The union belongs to the seamen, and under the proposed arrangement what is now lost to the broker will be gained by the seamen themselves through their union.

A-3729. *The Chairman*: You want direct employment without the intermediary contractor coming in?—Yes, just as it is the case with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

A-3730. *Mr. Clow*: Is that quite fair for the union to take a percentage from the men?—No, not from the men, but from the company which now pays it to the broker.

A-3731. But ultimately that has to come from the men?—No, besides the amount that is paid to the men the company pays a percentage as commission to the broker. And we want that this should be given to us so that we might utilize that for welfare work among seamen.

A-3732. *Mr. Asavle*: In your memorandum you refer to seamen recruited for the saloon and other services residing in residential clubs in Bombay. By whom are these clubs governed?—By the managing committees of the clubs concerned. Every village in Goa has its club in Bombay and there are sometimes five or six hundred people in such clubs. Only the unemployed live in those clubs. The employed live elsewhere in separate houses, so that it is an asylum for the unemployed.

A-3733. *The Chairman*: Is that a co-operative arrangement?—Yes.

A-3734. *Mr. Asavle*: What rent do they charge per seaman?—The rent varies from annas 12 to Rs. 2-8-0. The club of which I am the president of the managing committee charges Rs. 2. The charges in other clubs range from 12 annas to Rs. 2. It may be possibly more, but I do not know.

A-3735. What accommodation have you in your club?—My club consists of four big halls.

A-3736. How many are accommodated there?—The total membership is 600. We have on an average about 50 persons living there, because ours is mostly a seamen's club. The other clubs are very congested.

A-3737. Do you charge rent for seamen while they are away at sea?—Yes, we do.

A-3738. *The Chairman*: Is that rent or subscription for membership?—That is contribution for membership.

A-3739. And they continue their membership during the time they are at sea?—Yes.

A-3740. That is a sort of co-operative arrangement?—Yes, that is.

A-3741. And a very sensible one too?—That has been in existence for over 100 years.

A-3742. *Mr. Asavle*: You have referred to the help given by your union to seamen who are unemployed or ill and so on. Till now, to how many members have you given these benefits?—To several members. At present I have not the books with me to tell you the exact number.

A-3743. Approximately what amount have you spent on such welfare work among your seamen?—Not less than Rs. 2,000.

A-3744. In how many years?—In two years, i.e., ever since the rules relating to these benefits were passed by the union.

A-3745. How many members have been benefited?—I cannot give the exact number off-hand.

A-3746. Could you give a statement to the Commission embodying all these details?—Yes, I could.

A-3747. Why do you prefer the present system of recruitment adopted by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company?—Because under that the broker has the least to do.

A-3748. But do you not think that it would be better if this power is given to the shipping master?—The shipping master and the brokers are sometimes on friendly terms.

A-3749. In what way?—Of course, I cannot state as a matter of fact; it is only my suspicion that the shipping master and the brokers are very often on friendly terms, and the seaman after all has to pay for their friendliness.

A-3750. If it were so, you must have received complaints from your members to that effect?—As I said, I have no direct information though there are many complaints made to that effect.

A-3751. Have you in your union these gentlemen: Patrick DeSa?—Yes, he is here.

A-3752. Logario Pereira, Augustus Fernandez, Antonio Rodrigues, Diago Fernandez?—No. They are all Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's servants.

A-3753. Do they not come to help your union?—Of course, we are co-operating with the company; we are not warring with the company. I do not know what you mean by their giving us help.

A-3754. By engaging those men who go through your union?—I do not suppose they are the engaging officers of the company.

A-3755. *Mr. Lallji*: You say that your union is confined to saloon crews who are men from Goa. Are there no Goanese in the other union?—There may be a few.

A-3756. Is it a fact that out of the 12,000 saloon men in the other union a great majority of them are from Goa?—I do not think that is a fact.

A-3757. How many of the 12,000 members of the other union you think are Goanese?—At the most 2,000 or 3,000.

A-3758. As I have said, the other union claim a membership of 12,000 and if only 2,000 of them are Goanese to what class the rest of them belong?—I do not think they have a membership of 12,000, because in that case they should be getting an income of Rs. 60,000.

A-3759. That means that the figure of 12,000 is not right?—No, because I know that their income is not Rs. 60,000.

A-3760. You admit that there are about 2,000 to 3,000 Goanese in the other union?—Yes, but some of them are also members of our union.

A-3761. So there is no class distinction made by the other union ?—Our union has restricted its membership to one class of people because otherwise it might lead to riots.

A-3762. May I take it that your union will not admit other classes of people while the other union will admit and has admitted ?—May be.

A-3763. I put it to you that most of your members are in the employ of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation and British India Steam Navigation Companies and not in other lines ?—Yes.

A-3764. So far as the other lines are concerned it is the other union that supplies the men ?—The saloon crews of other lines put together will not be more than one-tenth of the P. & O. crew.

A-3765. You have not got any deck or engine crew ?—We do not take them.

A-3766. Do you not think it is in the interests of seamen that all classes of people should join together ?—My view is that there should be a separate union for each class of people and a joint committee composed of representatives of all the unions.

A-3767. If Government were to appoint an employment officer, do you think there will be any difficulty ?—I do not think there is any reason to incur that expenditure.

A-3768. My question is whether there will be any difficulty ?—Yes, there will be difficulty.

A-3769. What help do you get from the shipping companies ? Do you get any subsidy ?—We do not get any subsidy from the companies.

A-3770. You have about 6,500 members of whom 2,500 get employment at one time, that means that you give each member a turn after three years ?—At the time when I wrote this memorandum, those who were in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company were getting employment after 13 months in rotation, but the employment period, as I have ascertained it to-day, has become only of one year.

A-3771. May I take it that at present there are 2,500 persons employed ?—Yes, in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

A-3772. If every one of you were to get a turn once a year, what must be your membership ? Would it be 6,500 ?—It is 6,500.

A-3773. Then how do you reconcile the two statements, namely, that you have 6,500 members and only 2,500 are employed and still every one gets a turn once a year ?—You have missed this important fact that certain of our members who are working in other companies do not get employment. So far as the members who are working in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company are concerned, they get a chance once in a year, but others are not getting employment for three or four years.

A-3774. May I take it that your union wants to give preference only to those who are employed in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and does not care for those who are employed in other companies ?—We are trying our level best to help the others, but we cannot force the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company to employ them. I would like the Government to do that.

A-3775. It comes to this that in this respect you are unable to give a fair treatment to all your members ?—We are trying our best.

A-3776. But you are unable to do it now ?—The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company agreed to our representation but the other companies have not. What can we do ?

A-3777. Why not request the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company to give chance to all the members of your union ?—In that case, the period of unemployment will be far greater ; members who are now getting turns every 13 months will be getting only every 20 months.

A-3778. But the average will be reduced ?—That will not allay unemployment ; unemployment would be the same in any case.

A-3779. I think so far as your members working in the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company are concerned there is no complaint about food, clothing and such other things ?—No.

A-3780. *Mr. Cliff* : It is stated in a document that one of the officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was the President of your union ; is that true ?—It is not true.

A-3781. Who is he ?—He is one of the servants of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. According to the constitution that was passed at a general meeting, the member of the Committee had to be a manager of a village club. The gentleman

you refer to was the President of three village clubs, and we elected him as a member of the committee.

A-3782. I just wanted to know what office this person held ?—He was the President of the temporary committee that was appointed to organize the union.

A-3783. *Mr. Joshi* : An official of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company came to organize the union ?—He did not come in his capacity as an official of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company but came in his capacity as manager of three village clubs.

A-3784. *Mr. Cliff* : I understand that the officer referred to was the President of the temporary committee that formed the union ?—Yes.

A-3785. Had he any concern as an officer of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company with recruitment and employment of seamen ?—No, none whatever.

A-3786. *Mr. Ahmed* : Do you know the Draft Conventions and recommendations that have been adopted by the International Labour Conference ?—Yes.

A-3787. You know that the Draft Conventions refer to the limitation of hours of work, the establishment of an international seamen's code, the age of employment, giving facilities for finding employment for seamen and the repatriation of seamen. The Government of India do not want to give effect to these ratifications of the International Labour Conference and they have passed resolutions to that effect. I suppose you do not agree with the Government of India for passing those resolutions which will be detrimental to the interests of Indian seamen ?—Certainly, some of them are detrimental because the resolutions have been passed without actually knowing the conditions of seamen.

A-3783. So you accept the recommendations of the Draft Conventions of the International Labour Conference which will be beneficial to your interests ?—Some of them will be beneficial, but others may not be applicable to our conditions in India.

A-3789. *The Chairman* : You do not accept all of them ?—I do not.

A-3790. *Mr. Ahmed* : You accept about the hours of works ; you also accept about the repatriation of seamen ?—Yes.

A-3791. You want an international seamen's code which will be beneficial to your interests ?—Not necessarily.

A-3792. You want facilities for employment ?—Certainly.

A-3793. You said that there are many people who served during the War and who cannot now find employment ?—Yes, unfortunately.

A-3794. I suppose there are some of those Indian seamen whose boats were torpedoed in the Mediterranean ?—Yes. A large number of them were Indian Christians ; they were made prisoners of war in Germany and in Persia ; no less than 50 of them died ; they had to undergo a lot of suffering. Many of them are at present unfortunately unemployed.

A-3795. Did their heirs, relatives or dependants get any compensation or reward ?—Some of them did get.

A-3796. And the others did not ?—No.

A-3797. You are in favour that Government should enquire into this matter and that what is due to them, according to the distribution of money by way of compensation, should be given to them ?—Yes.

A-3798. Your union consists of a sufficient number of saloon crews but not of men in the other departments ; but I suppose you are speaking all the same on behalf of all men ?—No ; I am concerned only with the saloon crew.

A-3799. Your wages in the saloon department are not exactly the same as the saloon men in other countries are getting ?—Our wages are slightly less than what a European gets, but I think they are fair and reasonable where the P. & O. Company are concerned. No man has ever made a complaint, and as far as we know our saloon men are satisfied with their wages in the P. & O. Company.

A-3800. Do they get employment all the time ?—They do not, that is my grievance.

A-3801. You are in favour of registration ?—Yes, registration in separate departments. No new seaman should be recruited till those who are on the waiting list are fully absorbed.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

BOMBAY

Monday, 25th November 1929

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. J. H. WHITLEY (*Chairman*).

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| Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, Kt., K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. | Mr. JOHN CLIFT. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (<i>Medical Assessor</i>). |
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| Mr. HOOSAINBHOY A. LALLJI, M.L.C. Mr. R. S. ASAVLE, M.L.C. | } <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i> |
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| Dr. (Miss) T. G. H. CAMA. Mrs. K. WAGH. | } <i>Lady Assessors.</i> |
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| Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN | } <i>Joint Secretaries.</i> |
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**Mr. T. W. JOHNSTONE, M.B.E., Chief Inspector of Factories and
Dr. R. J. TATA, Certifying Surgeon, Bombay.**

A-3802. *The Chairman* : You are the Chief Inspector of Factories in Bombay ?—
(Mr. Johnstone) Yes.

A-3803. And you have with you Dr. Tata, Certifying Surgeon ?—Yes.

A-3804. How long have you held the office of Chief Inspector of Factories ?—Since
May 1923. I was Inspector from 1913 to 1923, and then I was Chief Inspector.

A-3805. You have had a long experience of factory work in Bombay ?—Sixteen years.

A-3806. In your memorandum you deal with the value and effects of the system of
employing jobbers. You say that the system has certain advantages, but that the jobber
wields far more power than his capabilities warrant and he often abuses it. You do not
however suggest a remedy ?—I think that is a very difficult proposition.

A-3807. Have you experience of any factories where they employ a personnel officer ?—
I think in Sholapur there is a full-time welfare supervisor who also looks into certain
questions connected with the engagement of the personnel.

A-3808. Do you think that where there is such an officer the evils which arise in some
cases from the power of the jobbers are diminished ?—I think that would undoubtedly
follow.

A-3809. Do you think that if all mills had an officer of that kind it would
tend to diminish the undesirable power of the jobber ?—It certainly would, but it would
take sometime before the system could be radically altered.

A-3810. It is a very old rooted custom ?—That is so.

A-3811. But you think that an officer of that kind, dealing specially with the employ-
ment of the personnel, would tend to diminish the power of the jobber ?—His work would
be subject, of course, to the managers. He would not be able to override the managers.